

# SIGHT AND SOUND

SUMMER 1941    VOL 10 NO 38    PRICE SIXPENCE

ARTICLES:

CREDO OF A CRITIC

A NEWS REEL MAN'S CONSCIENCE

CELLULOID AND BATTLE DRESS

NEW YORK LETTER

THE CANADIAN SCENE

CONTRIBUTORS:

Dilys Powell

Gerald Sanger

R. S. Lambert

Basil Wright

Forsyth Hardy

Aveling Ginever

PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

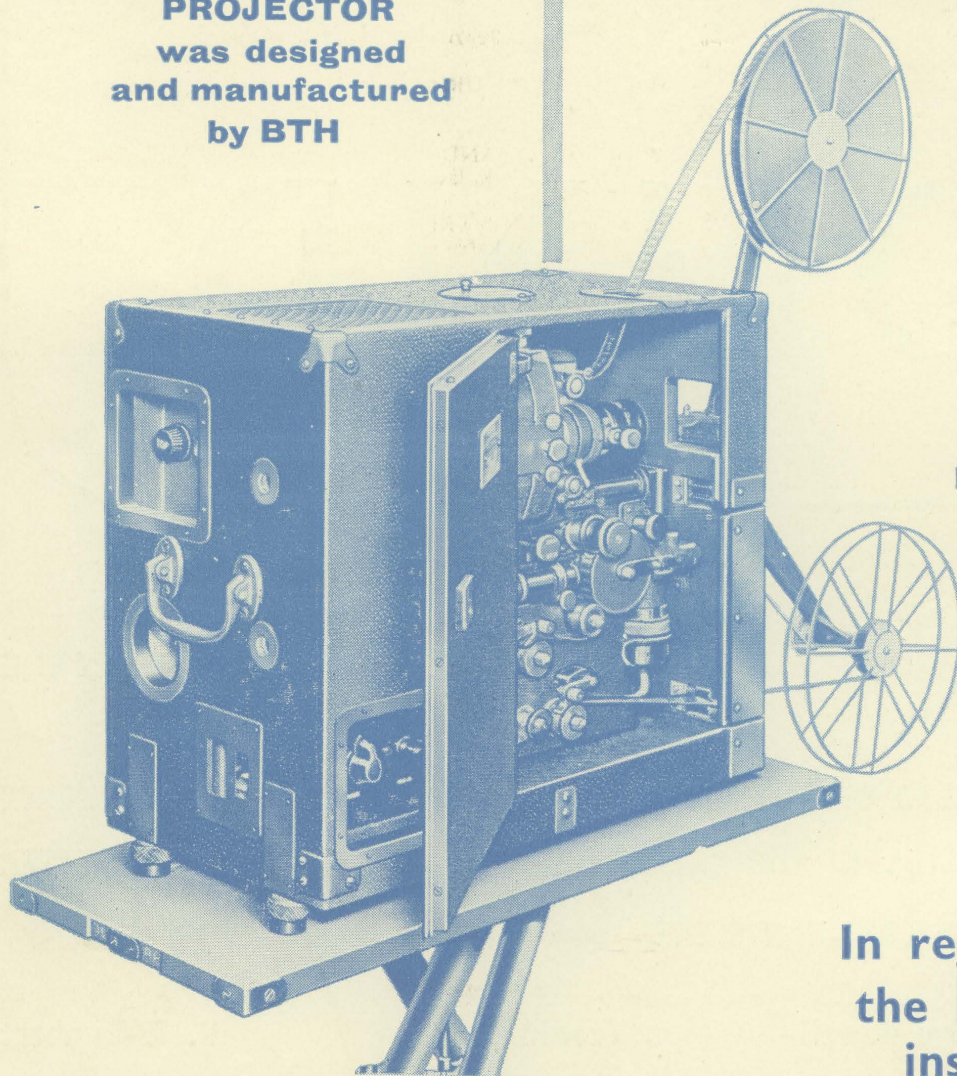




# 16mm. SOUND FILM PROJECTOR

**THE FIRST  
16mm. SOUND FILM  
PROJECTOR  
was designed  
and manufactured  
by BTH**

The most up-to-date British made portable equipment, giving Sound or Silent Picture quality comparable with standard cinema equipment.



**A VALUABLE  
AID TO:-**  
EDUCATION  
INSTRUCTION  
RESEARCH  
PROPAGANDA  
ENTERTAINMENT  
ADVERTISING

*Send your enquiries to  
Sound Reproducer Sales.*

In regular use by  
the **R.A.F.** for  
instructional  
purposes

## BTH

## RUGBY

THE BRITISH THOMSON-HOUSTON COMPANY LIMITED, RUGBY, ENGLAND.



A2894N



PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE 4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET LONDON WC1

## CONTENTS

NEWS REEL: Army Film Reorganisation; News from Australia; What the Empire Wants; Carnegie Educational Film Campaign, etc. 15	CREDO OF A CRITIC: Dilys Powell, of the <i>Sunday Times</i> , states what principles guide a film critic 26
THE FRENCH FILM: M. André Bernheim, a well-known figure in French film circles, says that team work was the secret of the success of the French School 18	FILMS OF THE QUARTER: Reviewed by Evelyn Russell 28
THE GERMAN FILM: Herr J. O. Reichenheim shows the political background of U.F.A. which rendered it an easy prey to Goebbels 19	AN OPEN LETTER TO FILM SOCIETIES: The sources from which Film Societies can book up for the next season, by Forsyth Hardy 29
REALIST REVIEW: Basil Wright examines the progress of Documentary since the war 20	NAZI PLANS: Reprinted from <i>The Motion Picture Herald</i> 30
A NEWS REEL MAN'S CONSCIENCE: Gerald Sanger, the Editor of <i>British Movietone News</i> , wants to know why a free man saying a good word for his country is labelled a propagandist 22	MOTION PICTURE DESIGN: Mr. Carrick's new book reviewed 31
THE CANADIAN SCENE: R. S. Lambert, ex-Editor of <i>The Listener</i> , writes of film developments in Canada 23	CELLULOID AND BATTLEDRESS: Suggestions from William E. Dick, late R.A.S.C. 32
NEW YORK LETTER: Herman G. Weinberg on the latest American films 25	REGIONAL CENTRES FOR MECHANICAL AIDS: A suggestion by Patrick Meredith, of Exeter 33
	FILMS FOR THE YOUTH MOVEMENT: By R. S. Miles 34
	PRINCIPLES OF TECHNICAL FILM PRODUCTION: By Aveling Ginever, of Gee Films 35
	NEWS FROM THE SOCIETIES: A new feature 36

## TO READERS

The utmost latitude is given to contributors to SIGHT AND SOUND and, therefore, the opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily in agreement with those of the British Film Institute. The COPYRIGHT in all articles published in SIGHT AND SOUND is reserved to the British Film Institute and reproduction without permission is therefore expressly forbidden.

---

Editorial and Publishing Offices: British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. SIGHT AND SOUND is sent free to members of the Institute (annual subscription £1. 1s. od.). The annual subscription for SIGHT AND SOUND is 2s. 6d. including postage. Particulars of advertisement rates upon application to E. E. Preston, 69 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. (Telephone: Central 3952.)

---



# DARTINGTON HALL FILM UNIT

TOTNES, DEVON

## PRODUCERS of:

**GALAPAGOS.** 'An original biological film, and one of the best in existence'.

**AN UPLAND AND LOWLAND FARM.** 'May be classed among the small number of those which may really be called teaching films'.

**NOMADS.** 'A really excellent film suitable for a lesson in geography'.

**RIVERS.** 'An ideal teaching film'.

**NORWAY TODAY.** 'A very good film'.

## IN PRODUCTION:

**TWO NORWEGIAN TOWNS. MILK.**  
**THE RIVER IN THE MOUNTAIN.** Silent.

**WAR ALTERS GEOGRAPHY.**  
**THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE.** Sound.

*List available on request.*

## These entertaining Sound Films may be borrowed free

P.F.B. CINEMAGAZINES 16 mm. and 35 mm.  
sound. 10 minutes

- No. 1. Raising water through the ages; oil tankers; building Staines reservoir; orchard heating.
- No. 2. Big gamefishing for swordfish off the coast of Australia; the clock at Wells Cathedral; making a glass petrol pump globe.
- No. 3. Fitting the new "Mauretania"; refuelling an Imperial Airways liner at Kisumu, Lake Victoria; Mr. Tedham makes a wheel.
- No. 4. Clearing scrub in Australia; uses of the oxy-propane flame in cutting metal and metal-spraying; changing a railway bridge at night.
- No. 5. An African sheep farm; moving a 35 ton oil tank; air-conditioning in a modern cinema.
- No. 6. Working of a glass factory; use of the combine harvester and baler; shoeing a horse.

ALSO AVAILABLE: 16 mm. and 35 mm. Sound and Silent films showing how Oil is produced; the Uses of Oil; how Motor Cars work.

All films are printed on "non-flam" stock.  
Write for catalogue and synopses to:—

**PETROLEUM FILMS  
BUREAU • 15 HAY HILL  
BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON, W.1**

## FILM APPRECIATION

The National Film Library has published a new catalogue of the films available in its Loan Section.

**6d.**

**Reprints of the Primitives**

**Composite Film**

**Classic Feature Films**

**Documentaries**

**Extracts illustrating Technique**

*Particulars from :*

**The National Film Library,**

**4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.**



## FILM LIBRARY

The Ministry of Food offer a free loan service of films of an educational character in connection with the production and preparation of food.

A catalogue of films available giving details of sizes, sound or silent, a short synopsis of each film and conditions of issue will be sent free on request.

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD FILM  
LIBRARY, NEVILLE HOUSE, LONDON, S.W.1.



# NEWS REEL

## Comments on the Quarter's Happenings

### Army Film Reorganisation

"From the members of the Army Council to the last joined recruit the Army is in a fair way to become film-minded!" The Government Cinematograph Adviser and Captain Paul Kimberley, one of the Governors of the British Film Institute and Honorary Technical Adviser to the War Office, are to be congratulated on having worked out a complete scheme for putting all Army film activities under one central control and thereby preventing waste of time, effort and temper in getting things done.

The new set up embraces entertainment, instruction and education. It covers the supply of films and equipment and their operation and repair. It also undertakes the task of the production of such films as the Army wants and what is perhaps even more important, the taking and assembling of a film record of the war on land.

The central direction and control having been established, the new Film Directorate will work through film officers attached to each Command and area. To each of these will be attached a film library with equipment for servicing and repairs. They will also control the 16 mm. projectors, the mobile 16 mm. units and the mobile 35 mm. vans, each of which will have a generator so that shows can be given to units in the most isolated spots.

One aspect which it is hoped will be borne in mind, is the need for refresher courses both for operators and film officers. Many of the former, though expert theatrical projectionists, know little about road showing on 16 mm., and if damage is to be avoided with the consequent waste of money and time in having a machine out of commission, each man attached to the Directorate should be put through a pretty severe course to ensure that he knows his particular job as thoroughly as any other of the technical corps. The officers will need to be given suggestions and ideas on making the best possible use of the equipment and films for which they are responsible.

Is it too much to hope that the other services will take a leaf out of the Army's book and reconsider all their film work? New developments have taken place piecemeal and now is the time to take stock.

### News from Australia

The report of the Chief Censor of the Commonwealth of Australia provides information that 68.8 per cent of all films shown in 1940 were of United States origin, as opposed to 19.2 per cent British. Of the features the percentages were 85 per cent and 13 per cent respectively, showing that it is only in the short field that we are getting anything like a reasonable showing of our material.

The report contains a reference to Children and the

Films. It says that the unsuitability of the majority of films, and particularly the case of the Saturday afternoon matinée, is the subject of frequent comment; but the censors can make no constructive or effective suggestion both because the suitable films are not available, and because even if they were, suburban and country exhibitors cannot afford to hire two feature programmes, one for showing in the afternoon and one for the evening. There is the further difficulty that the programmes are mixed A and U certificates. In a test of 118 programmes, double feature programmes in the suburbs, in 49 cases both films were A, in 47 mixed A and U and only in 22 were both suitable for universal exhibition.

On the standards of censorship in Australia the report states that the Censorship endeavours to bear in mind that the cinema is attended by all classes and ages of the population, and also that customs, habits and the generally accepted thought and ideas as to propriety are constantly undergoing change. And this, especially the last section, is illuminating as showing a progressive mind in control.

### What Queensland Wants

A very interesting report has been received from the Department of Public Instruction for Queensland. In the State there are 41 schools equipped with 16 mm. sound and 78 with 16 mm. silent. Beyond these nineteen schools the only users of sub-standard films are the Shell Company, General Motors, the C.E.M.S. (Brisbane) and Ford Motors.

The State's film library has 228 titles of which 117 are sound films and 171 silent. This serves all schools and bodies using films for educational purposes. The greatest demands are naturally for purely classroom films (e.g. many of the G.B.I.) and for films such as *The Face of Britain*, *Around the Village Green of Duchy of Cornwall*.

The report continues: The classroom film should be simple and clear cut, built up step by step and often brought to its conclusion by a recapitulation of the main points. . . . The use of sound in classroom films calls for particular care. Commentary can make or ruin the film. The safest way is to reduce it to a minimum, make it slow and deliberate and to have it given in a voice that the children will easily follow. Too often the commentary is little more than a continuous oral accompaniment to the pictures so rapid that even adults have difficulty in following it. Sound commentary unless it is really expert is wasted in films of objects otherwise devoid of sound, e.g. natural history. On the other hand natural sounds—those which go to make the complete representation of an object or activity, e.g. machinery, human and animal voices, etc., are essential and should be covered as fully as possible.



## What the Empire Wants

The same Report refers to the subjects that are wanted. "We in Queensland are unable to secure satisfactory films on the relations between one country and another. We would like simple films to show what Canada means to Great Britain and Great Britain to Canada, what Australia has in common (or in contrast) with South Africa and so on. Especially is there a demand for a graphic presentation of the main trade routes, with glimpses of the peoples and places they connect. There will always be a welcome for historical subjects both of the diagrammatic type of the dramatic form. The reproduction of events such as the signing of Magna Carta, the voyage of the Pilgrim Fathers or the passing of the First Reform Bill; the glimpses of the lives of famous scientists and benefactors like Lister, Faraday, Strathcona, Robert Owen; sidelights on the life of the English people at different times, Norman England, the Elizabethan era, colonial expansion through the work of the explorers and traders; the schools are waiting for all these things in cinematographic form."

All these suggestions are borne out by a letter from New Zealand which shows that the schools there want almost exactly the same things. In conversation Canadians say the same too. Such news should be a challenge to all those agencies—official and unofficial—who are concerned with Commonwealth affairs to satisfy this insistent and continuous demand from that most fruitful of fields—that of education.

## The New Campaign

As announced in our last issue, thanks to the generosity of the Carnegie Trustees, the follow-up to last year's Educational Film Campaign was able to start at the beginning of May. Mr. Bernard E. Gillett, of Birmingham, has again been given leave by the Air Ministry, and has been appointed by the Governors to see through this new effort.

The new campaign has been somewhat slow in getting under way owing to the petrol difficulties, but now these have largely been solved and Mr. Gillett should be able to move freely about the country. The first results are quite satisfactory. Directors have not allowed their interest to be submerged by war-time difficulties and in several cases they reported that as a result of last year's visits they organised teachers' film refresher courses. In at least one case those who attended were examined and if they passed were given Certificates of Proficiency. By this means the wear and tear on films has been lessened and owing to proper handling the cost of maintenance of the local projectors has been considerably decreased. Mr. Gillett also reports that the A.T.C., the Youth Groups and the Government Evacuation Camps are amongst the big potential new users of films.

It seems likely that quite a lot of Mr. Gillett's time during the next few months will be taken up organising courses of this nature in various parts of the country. One has already been held at Lewes and another is shortly to be held at Mansfield. Owing to the shortness of the time at the Institute's disposal it is hoped that one outcome of every teachers' course will be the formation of a teacher's film group. These bodies perform invaluable service in maintaining interest in the subject, of acting as previewing agencies and centres for appraising the teaching values of different films. They are also useful for experimenting and working out new means of using films in the school.

## The Shape of Things to Come

News from the studios on both sides of the Atlantic does not seem to show that anything very much is going forward. Hollywood seems to have fallen into the mid-year doldrums when weary stars, overworked directors and exhausted business executives alike seek a month or so's vacation. The most exciting new productions that are going forward seem to be *Lady in the Dark*, which will be a film version of a successful Broadway play starring Gertrude Lawrence; a new full length Max Fleischer cartoon; a new M.G.M. spectacle *The Dam*, about which little is known save that the story is written round a flood control project in the south-west. Hal Roach, of Laurel and Hardy fame, has decided to make 50-minute comic films instead of full length features; and this is all to the good, for slapstick is only capable of making the ribs ache with laughter for a limited period, after which it becomes as tedious as the club bore's joke. Another tit-bit of news is that Disney is mixing studio shots with cartoon work in his *Reluctant Dragon*, and one of the live characters will be Robert Benchley. But all of this is rather small beer. The real reason seems to be that Hollywood is undecided to what waggon, national or international, its policy is to be hitched, and though there are signings up and talks of four films by this director and a couple by that, in fact the industry is waiting to see which way the cat jumps before committing itself too definitely.

## The British Studios

British studios are also in the doldrums. After quite a number of first-class pictures issued in the early summer we have now struck a lean patch. The most notable effort on the floor is *The Big Blockade*, which is being made at Ealing and directed by Charles Frend. It is to be a film of that propaganda type in which Michael Balcon is so interested. The story is written around Britain's blockade of Germany and German-occupied territories. It has a strong documentary background thanks to the help of the Admiralty and the R.A.F., and has an enormous cast, including even politicians like Dr. Dalton and Mr. Ronald Cross, and stars playing minor parts. Will Hay, for example, who is working in *The Black Sheep of Whitehall*, in the same studio, crossed to another stage to become a trawler skipper. It will form a companion picture to *Ships with Wings*.

At Denham there is being made a new "Saint" picture called *Meet the Tiger*, with Hugh Sinclair as usual as the Saint. The exteriors were to have been shot on the coast, but as the bit they wanted is a prohibited area the cliffs of Old England have had to be of the ersatz variety inside the studio.

All the shorts companies have been very busy making films for one official body or another, and some of the sponsors including I.C.I. have come back into the market. The most noteworthy of the official shorts are *Merchant Seamen*, the magnificent new Crown Film Unit dramatic documentary, quite a pleasing little film on the W.A.A.F., and the new British Council industrial colour series which started with *Queen Cotton* and is continuing with another on Harris tweed. The most notable fact of all the productions is the high technical standard which is maintained combined with real insight into the problem to be screened.



## The Central Film Library

The Central Film Library which now handles the old G.P.O. and Empire Film Libraries, as well as the M.O.I. films, has over 4,000 organisations and individuals who borrow films from it. In the nine months to the end of June no fewer than 14,600 M.O.I. films were sent out from the Library to borrowers with their own projectors, and nearly 28,000 G.P.O. and Empire films were despatched during the same period. This seems to prove that provided the hire charges of educational films can be brought within the means of borrowers, the companies need not fear that the supply will exceed the demand.

Mr. William Farr, the librarian, tells us that more new M.O.I. films are being got ready and by October there will be an additional 40 titles in the Library, making about 140 in all. These will include a number of instructional films on food and health, and also some of the more recent issues of the March of Time. Though many of these new titles have already been released through the theatres, a certain number have been specially made for non-theatrical showing.

## Film Library Additions

Last quarter we were able to report that the Ministry of Information had decided to present copies of their films to the National Film Library for preservation. Since then the British Council has made a similar decision and has handed over to the Library one hundred and twelve of its short films. Others are to follow.

The Library's Selection Committee continues to meet each month to consider current feature films and news reels, and the following feature films chosen by the Committee have been presented during the quarter by the generosity of their distributors and producers:

*Convoy* (A.B.F.D.)—Kept because of its topical interest.  
*It's in the Air* (A.B.F.D.)—Chosen as an example of the work of George Formby.

*Proud Valley* (A.B.F.D.)—Selected for its story and the acting of Paul Robeson.

*The Rudd Family Goes to Town* (A.B.F.D.)—As an example of the family series in the Australian film.

*There Ain't No Justice* (A.B.F.D.)—For its production value and especially for its portrayal of working-class life.

*The Invisible Man* (General Films)—For its production value, with special reference to the trick work.

*The Man Who Knew Too Much* (General Films)—As an example of Hitchcock's work.

*The Mikado* (General Films)—As an interesting Technicolour version of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

*Dark Victory* (Warner)—For the acting of Bette Davis.

*Dodge City* (Warner)—As an exceptional film of its kind.  
*Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (Warner)—As a film of exceptional topical interest and heralding a new style in American production.

*The Old Maid* (Warner)—As a notable film and a faithful period piece.

*The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (Warner)—As a good costume piece with Bette Davis.

*The Sea Hawk* (Warner)—For its dramatic and topical interest.

*The Story of Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* (Warner)—As an outstanding production.

*They Drive by Night* (Warner)—As a good thriller and for its authentic background.

*We're Not Alone* (Warner)—For the acting of Paul Muni.

*Yes My Darling Daughter* (Warner)—For its sociological interest.

The Loan Section of the Library continues to be well used. Normally, non-theatrical film bookings slump very sharply in the summer season. This year, however, the fall has not been nearly so sharp. On the contrary, after a normal April, bookings rose in May and rose again in June. One possible cause may be the fact that black-out arrangements enable rooms to be darkened more easily than in normal times. A much more important factor, however, is the increasing use being made of the Library's Loan Section by troops. Over half of the bookings for June, for example, came from Army units.

## Air Raids, Dreams and Films

In a recent number of *The Times Educational Supplement* a correspondent wrote an interesting article describing the reactions of children to a heavy air-raid. Dreams, it is stated, proved to be very ordinary with rather less exciting content than usual! One child of 12 whose house had been demolished and who was rescued from under the "debree" described its dream as follows:—

"I dreamt that I was in America with my auntie and her two sons. The ship I went on was the *Queen Mary*. . . . When we got there we went straight to my auntie, who lived in a sky-scraper. We went in the lift right to the top of the building, which they call the Pen-house. When we got to my auntie's door we rang the bell. A black maid came to the door and showed us in. My auntie was dressing for dinner, so the maid showed us in a lovely room where there was a big fire burning. After a little while my auntie came in. She was very glad to see us. Then she asked us to stay to have dinner with her. That night we all slept in a lovely room. Next morning I woke up and found it was all a dream."

It is interesting to see the accuracy of this child's memory of its visit to the cinema for the whole of this dream is pure cinema and ordinary comedy and drama as opposed to the Western at that!

## Erratum

Mr. Edward Dryhurst writes from Warner Bros. at Teddington Studios:

A couple of rather glaring errors have crept into your interesting article under the heading of "Why Not a School of British Film Making?" in the current issue of SIGHT AND SOUND.

You credit David Hume and Havelock Allen with the authorship of the screen plays of *This Man is Dangerous* and the *This Man is News* series respectively.

In point of fact, David Hume is the author of the novel ("They Called Him Death") on which the screen play of *This Man is Dangerous* was based, while Havelock Allen was the producer of the *This Man is News* series.

The screen play of the first-named was written by myself and those of the other pictures by Roger MacDougall and Allan Mackinnon.



# André Bernheim writes of the French Film

*M. André Bernheim was a well known figure in French Film Circles before the capitulation. In this article he analyses the reasons for the greatness of the French film in the years immediately preceding the war. He attributes it to organisation and the fact that in 1935 the French film industry almost totally disappeared; Pathé, Nathan and Gaumont in a financial scandal; lack of American capital put Paramount out of production; Eclair went under and the firm of Jacques Haik went into liquidation. Then a few independent producers decided to employ the really good elements which still existed in France. Of the 120 films which formed the yearly French output, some 15 were made in this way. It was these few that made the reputation of France throughout the world. The producers had realised that for quality a star was not enough; nor could a director individually work miracles; nor a cutter nor a camera-man. They also realised the fundamental importance of the scenario and the dialogue and so as a result of perfect team work and organisation they succeeded in turning out films of the "French School".*

*No longer does such production continue in the France of to-day, but after the war——?*

Comment s'est établie la réputation du cinéma français entre 1935 et 1940?

Réputation d'autant plus frappante que depuis 1918 jusqu'en 1935 le seul résultat de l'invention du cinéma parlant semblait être d'avoir rapproché le cinéma du théâtre dont il avait eu tant de peine à se dégager pendant les années précédentes. Tout l'effort et l'enseignement de 30 années de cinéma étaient devenus inutiles. Nous assistions aux scènes comiques les plus pauvres, au plaisanteries les plus fatiguées et aux vaudevilles les plus désolants ou à la grandiloquence la plus facile.

Et on restait vraiment confondu de la disproportion entre l'importance du cinéma et la banalité des résultats obtenus.

On se contentait avant de tourner d'écrire comme pour un opéra une sorte de livret—et quel livret!

Quelques auteurs s'en mêlèrent—mais quels auteurs!

Les glou glou des bouteilles faisaient un bruit de tonnerre, les craquements de parquet devenaient des tremblements de terre, le bruit du vent était comparable à celui des obus de 420.

*Les Trois Masques* de M. Charles Méré ou *La Nuit est à Nous* de M. Henri Roussel nous étaient offerts par les producteurs comme le fin du fin de l'invention nouvelle.

Les meilleurs écrivains avaient tenté d'attirer l'attention des producteurs sur le danger que présentaient ces productions de théâtre en conserve et ces pauvretés comiques.

En vain.

Et si on faisait d'autres choses en Amérique ou en Allemagne le public n'en savait rien.

Il fallut deux ans pour vaincre l'opposition des producteurs qui "protégeaient" l'art français. Les censeurs et les douanes avaient interdit ou chambré *L'Ange Bleu*, *L'Opéra de Quat' Sous* ou *Hallelujah*.

On repartit de plus belle vers les adaptations théâtrales. On dénaturait dans des productions hâtives et l'action et les personnages. On engageait des acteurs dont la réputation s'était faite au théâtre—et on vendait le film sur le titre de la pièce dont la célébrité devait tenter le public.

On était en plein cinéma "commercial".

Mais à quelques rares exceptions près le cinéma commercial ne paya pas.

Le public préférerait la production étrangère même dénaturée par l'affreux "doublage".

Sauf à Paris où il allait voir les productions américaines dans leurs versions originales—mais sour-titrées.

Il y eut cependant quelques exceptions et des films de rare qualité furent produits dès 1930.

René Clair avec *Sous les Toits de Paris* puis *A Nous la Liberté* et *Quatorze Juillet*, Marcel Achard avec *Jean de la Lune*, Feyder avec *Le Grand Jeu* et *Pension Mimosa* j'en passe et d'excellents.

Lorsque en 1935 un événement considérable se produisit; la disparition à peu près totale de l'industrie cinématographique française.

Pathé Nathan et Gaumont sombraient dans un scandale financier; les capitaux américains n'alimentaient plus Paramount, Eclair subissait la crise et ne produisait plus, Jacques Haik était en liquidation.

Pendant des années aucune de ces maisons n'avait tenté quoique ce soit pour découvrir ou essayer un auteur, un metteur en scène, un monteur ou un opérateur. Rien n'avait été fait pour sortir des sentiers battus et des moyens fatigués qui seuls avaient cours dans le cinématographe.

Et ce fut l'époque des producteurs indépendants.

Certains d'entre eux décidèrent d'employer les éléments de premier ordre qui existaient en France.

Sur les 120 films qui formèrent la production annuelle française, une quinzaine vont être faits chaque année par des producteurs là. Sur ces quinze films qui tous étaient des films où on avait cherché la qualité, cinq ou six étaient fort honorables, quatre ou cinq étaient excellents.

Ce sont ces films qui ont fait la réputation du cinéma français dans le monde de 1935 jusqu'à la guerre.

Comment cela s'est-il passé et pourquoi?

On s'est aperçu que la qualité payait. Mais on s'est aperçu aussi que l'interprétation d'un acteur connu, s'il pouvait aguïser la curiosité du public ne suffisait pas à assurer le succès.

On s'est aperçu qu'un bon metteur en scène était nécessaire mais qu'il ne pouvait pas, seul, sauver un film. Pas plus que le monteur ou l'opérateur qui cependant sont des éléments indispensables à une production. Mais on s'est surtout rendu compte de la valeur absolument essentielle du scénario et du dialogue.

Et cela c'était nouveau.



C'était même tellement nouveau que ceux parmi les producteurs qui non sans difficultés donnèrent toute l'importance requise au scénario et au dialogue furent les premiers surpris des résultats obtenus. Ce sont les metteurs en scène qui résistèrent un peu.

Jusqu'alors les pouvoirs du metteur en scène étaient dictatoriaux et certains d'entre eux tentèrent de freiner l'importance grandissante des auteurs dans la nouvelle production.

Certains, et non des moindres, réagirent contre les nouvelles tendances et voulurent prouver qu'un grand metteur en scène pouvait se passer complètement des auteurs.

Ce fut toujours l'échec dont le plus frappant fut celui de Jean Renoir avec "La Marseillaise".

C'était le même admirable Renoir de *La Grande Illusion* mais Spaak n'était pas là. Celui de *La Chienne* mais sans La Fouchardière.

Rappelez-vous *Carnet de Bal* ou *Pépé le Moko* et l'apport si important de Julien Duvivier. Mais pensez surtout,

quoiqu'il vous en coûte aujourd'hui, à Henri Jeanson.

Il faut toujours en revenir à l'histoire et au dialogue.

Un metteur en scène de talent peut augmenter d'une façon considérable la valeur et le succès d'un film. Mais il ne peut pas le sauver.

Des films dirigés par d'excellents metteurs en scène et interprétés par de bons acteurs ont été de retentissants échecs.

Mais il est difficile à un metteur en scène même médiocre d'abimer complètement une bonne histoire.

Avec un scénario et des dialogues bien faits l'échec est presque impossible.

Marcel Pagnol et Sacha Guitry, entre autres, l'ont prouvé.

Il n'y avait plus en France de production cinématographique organisée.

Pas plus qu'aujourd'hui en Angleterre.

Certains ont su chercher, trouver et se servir des auteurs.

C'est à eux que revient d'abord et surtout le succès de notre cinéma dans le monde depuis 1935 jusqu'à la guerre.

## *Herr Reichenheim, Assistant Editor of "Die Zeitung," writes of the German Film*

THAT THE NAZIS have destroyed the German film in the same manner as they have ruined German literature and German art is only partially correct. In so far as it refers to the big silent and sound German pictures which were made by great directors such as Lang, Murnau, Lubitsch and Berger, supported by famous German actors, the statement is true. It is not true, however, when one thinks of these innumerable second- and third-rate films which even in the time of the republic overflowed the market. These films were shown in all parts of the Reich to full houses. They were not seen abroad, but they paved the way for the Nazi films that were to follow. Indeed, one can even say there was no other manifestation of art in the republic which prepared the ground so well for the Nazis as these second-rate German films.

Before we discuss these there is still a word to say about the so-called "big German film" (Spitzenfilm) which the world has not seen since 1933. These pictures could compete with the first-rate American, Russian and—later on—French and British films, but in Germany they had only a limited success. Berlin and a few other towns appreciated them. They were also liked abroad. But they were a failure in most of the provinces. Any small success they may have had there was only due to the popularity of some actors and not because the people liked the art of the pictures. What was the reason for this?

One reason was that this kind of film was too "high-brow" for the masses. They dealt with historical, psychological and social problems which did not appeal to the man in the street, because he was not in touch with them in his daily life. A second and more important reason did not lie in the film itself; it developed as a result of the different political, religious and social opinions of the German people.

It was impossible to make a film which would be certain to please all types of people when present-day problems were the subject of the story. For these reasons the directors, generally, avoided this kind of film. Certainly, there were some exceptions, but they cost their producers a lot of money. The general result therefore was that, for the first-rate German film, out-of-the-way-topics were preferred. Themes from history (mostly carefully taken from *foreign* history), from fairy tales, sagas, technical problems of the future, events in foreign countries, even psychological and medical questions received preference. Therefore, one can say: what existed was a big German film industry, German directors, actors, musicians and technicians, but no German film. What existed was an "international" first-rate film "Made in Germany".

The second-rate German film mentioned above was produced systematically by the leading film company, the UFA and by other companies controlled by it. In about 1925-26 the UFA passed through a financial crisis and was taken over by the leader of the German Nationalistic Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei), Herr Hugenberg. This man also had under his control the big nationalistic newspaper trust, the Scherl trust. Being in possession of the UFA, Hugenberg used it as propaganda instrument for his political aims.

Thus he played (in the same manner as the Nazis did it later) on the instincts and weaknesses of the people, mainly the lower middle class. These people were in a very difficult economic position resulting from inflation and growing unemployment. In thousands of UFA-owned cinemas appeared films of Herr Hugenberg, which instilled nationalistic poison drop by drop into people's minds. It started with endless series of the so-called "Kasernenhof-Filme".



These films glorified the old Prussian army, the spirit of the barracks and the Prussian sergeant-major. In quite a subtle manner they criticised the "pacifist and international" German Republic. The greater masses were attracted by these films. Servants and clerks could shriek with laughter for a few pennies and could weep over sentimental love scenes.

A second kind of the Hugenberg film started later. After having prepared the ground by the financial successes of the "Kasernenhof-Filme", Herr Hugenberg was able to spend more lavishly for "higher" purposes. Now the so-called "National Film" of the UFA made its appearance. The stories were taken from German or rather Prussian history. Its aim was to encourage militarism, monarchy and anti-republican feelings. History was falsified or presented from a one-sided aspect à la Treitschke. The best known of these UFA films were the Friedericus films, which presented the time of Frederick II of Prussia as the "Golden Age". These films were acted by a third-rate actor, one Otto Gebühr, who became—only because of his resemblance to Frederick II—a national hero. After having exhausted this theme, Herr Hugenberg delved into the entire Prussian and old German history to discover topics of imperialistic and anti-republican propaganda. From these productions was only a step to the films about the former German colonial empire. These became very popular and incited the people against the "dishonest and unfair Treaty of Versailles".

Finally, there remains a third kind of the Hugenberg film. It appeared to be non-political, but it had a very bad influence on the average audience, because life was presented in an untrue and rose-coloured aspect. These pictures relied on the sentimentality of the people. They created an unrealistic atmosphere, showing the vineyards and castles of the Rhine, the romantic places and old student customs of Heidelberg, the girls and kisses of Vienna. In the background always stood invisible the nationalistic leader Hugenberg with an uplifted finger as if to say: Thus life could be, if there were no filthy Republic.

When the Nazis came into power, they could use at once this type of German films for their own purposes. It was only necessary to add to Hugenberg's old army sabres and plush-sofas a charge of "blood and soil" and "shining German youth with naked torsos". Then the Goebbels film which the Germans have borne since 1933 was ready!

When the Nazis are overthrown the German film will have a very important task to perform. The German film industry has proved by some of the first-rate films it made before 1933 that technically it is capable of this. But in future it will not be a nationalistic film any more. It has always been the best tradition of German culture since Dürer, Goethe and Beethoven to keep an European aspect. Out of the colourless "international film made in Germany" before the Nazis the German-European film of the future must be born.

## REALIST REVIEW

Says Basil Wright: "Despite difficulties (and sometimes Dangers), workers in Documentary are cheerfully turning out more films than they ever thought they could."

THE PROGRESS of documentary in Britain can be traced as a continuous process since John Grierson's *Drifters* (1928-9). On the thesis of using films for a basically sociological purpose ("the creative interpretation of actuality") documentary film workers were and are bound to work to a specific plan as well as to experiment as freely as possible in the use of the film-medium. The real reason why so many documentaries have been "sponsored" films is that more freedom in experimenting not only in technique, but also in difficult and often apparently untractable subject matter, was possible under this system than in the uncertain and temperamental market of the film trade itself.

Naturally the war has affected documentary very strongly, since this type of film is in essence an ideal propaganda and informational medium. It will therefore be worth examining the position of documentary as it stood in September, 1939.

### The Different Documentary Techniques

At this time experiment and development had been going on continuously for ten years. From one or two groups the movement had spread into quite a number of separate units, some operating in the open market and others being

definitely a part of a sponsoring organisation. In every unit, however, could be found members of the original documentary groups. The period of experiment pure and simple had widened out into a number of established techniques, on the basis of which further experiment was taking place. Briefly stated, the established techniques comprised the *Expositional* (e.g. much of the product of G.B.I. and the Shell Film Unit), the direct social study (e.g. *Housing Problems*, the *Nutrition Films*, etc.) and the *Dramatic* (e.g. *Night Mail* and *North Sea*). There was, of course, considerable and continuous overlap between all these three techniques, and many documentaries tended to combine them in a fairly generalised way. Experimentally speaking, the *dramatic* approach (originally signalled by *The Saving of Bill Blewitt*) was very much to the forefront. However much the conservative elements in documentary might complain it was by this time clear that the use of studio sets and reconstructions, personal stories and incidents, and actors as well, had come to stay. *North Sea* and *The Londoners* both pointed the way to the new field of experiment.

Thus, with three distinct techniques at its disposal, documentary was able to range over a wide field of public



enlightenment, still mainly non-theatrical, but with a growing influence in the cinemas, and, for that matter, with an influence on the subject matter and treatment of a handful of feature films.

### The Present Position

After two years of war the documentary units are busier—far busier—than they have ever been before. Output is still rising to meet the varied demands of Government Departments and other official bodies, to say nothing of a number of major public relations sponsors who are also gearing their film work to national needs. A great diversity of subject matter has to be dealt with; and the films have to be made under greater urgency—and usually greater difficulties—than in the more leisured times of peace. Film makers are inevitably handicapped by the maze of official regulations, the troubles attendant on obtaining official facilities, and sometimes by a shortage of studio space. Technicians in all departments are called upon to work at a far higher pressure than ever before. And, as the volume of work piles up, it is clear that it will be some time before a breathing space permits a considered review of developments.

One or two facts, however, have already become clear. The pre-war experiments in dramatic technique have proved of great value, not merely in the Crown Film Unit's longer productions such as *Men of the Lightship* and the wholly admirable *Merchant Seamen*, but also in the realm of Five Minute films, such as *Home Guard*, *Night Watch*, *They Also Serve*, and *Canteen on Wheels*. Most of these films represent anything from 70 per cent to 90 per cent pure studio shooting; and it is significant that most of them have made a far better impression than the studio Five Minuters made by accredited feature people film producers. Clearly the documentary approach, being based on the observance of reality and on many years' experience of the handling of ordinary people, is in a position to give an impression of actuality to the public; and, more importantly, to make the public feel that the subject dealt with is really a part of their own lives and responsibilities, and not a fictional episode divorced from their own experience.

### Reportage Films

Equally striking has been the use of short reportage films, made very rapidly, but using documentary and not newsreel methods. The most sensational example of these is, of course, *Britain Can Take It*. Another was *Neighbours Under Fire*, a five minuter shot in two or three days in Bermondsey under actual blitz conditions last autumn.

But it is the M.O.I.'s huge non-theatrical scheme which depends almost entirely on documentary for a continuous flow of one, two, or three reel films dealing with the social needs and problems arising in all sections of the community. Here it is the job of documentary films to give information clearly, concisely and in human terms; to sustain morale and increase the war effort; to analyse and to offer solutions to problems arising from war conditions in such fields as evacuation, feeding, education, labour, child welfare and a hundred others.

Here documentary's ten years of constant experiment in the filmic presentation of social problems is of considerable

value, provided of course that the sponsoring body (or the officials concerned) is prepared to go beyond a timid and lukewarm approach to the subject. Recently one or two films have been officially made in which a forthright and outspoken attitude to the subject has been gratifyingly in evidence; two examples in particular come to mind—*Five and Under* and *Living with Strangers*. There are signs that this more vigorous approach is becoming officially established and will be more and more in evidence.

### Fearless Propaganda

It is indeed both in the choice and treatment of subjects that the real problem lies. Workers in documentary are believers in a forward-looking propaganda policy. Their technique of film making has always been shaped to that end, and they do not believe that this work in the national effort can be fully effective until a fearless and well-co-ordinated propaganda system is put into operation.

Quite apart from the home front, a much more vigorous drive in overseas propaganda seems to be needed. Incidentally people probably do not realise that a number of documentaries are being made, both by the M.O.I., the British Council, and by other sponsors for overseas use; and that many of these are never seen in this country at all, since they are specially designed only for showings in other countries. Three notable examples of these are *Ordinary People*, *We Won't Forget*, and *Out of the Night*.

### Simpler Construction

In conclusion, it is difficult at this stage to sum up and evaluate the general trend of documentary at the present time. So much is being done, and things are moving so fast, that no one would risk a definite analysis. In general, however, there are several points which can be safely made. Firstly, it may be said that the general trend is towards a simpler filmic construction; it is felt that it is better to say one or two things clearly and dramatically rather than to range over a great number of aspects of the subject, however relevant each may appear. Secondly, it may be said that the urgencies of war make it less possible to make elaborate experiments in technique, for these take time and are often costly. Thirdly, it may be said that the war-time demands on our film makers ensure that most films are a testing ground for another type of experiment—experiment in the handling of people, experiment in the use of actors only, or of ordinary people only, or of a mixture of the two. In this field alone documentary has certainly gained immensely valuable experience over the last two years.

There is, however, no time just now for theorising, or for that matter, for what film people call "fiddling". What is needed is a big output of films which do their job, and in documentary people continue to see that this happens, then it is certain that documentary films will make all the progress that the most fanatical enthusiast for "montage" or "experiments in sound" or what-have-you could ever require. Meantime, despite difficulties (and sometimes dangers), workers in documentary are cheerfully turning out more films per month than they ever thought they could. They're not all good films—how can they be under the circumstances?—but in the aggregate they're nothing of which any workers need be ashamed.



# A News Reel Man's Conscience

By GERALD SANGER, of British Movietone News

SAID SOMEONE in my hearing: "The only effective film propaganda being done by the Government is the news reels". Which was complimentary, but based on a misconception.

The news reels are not "propaganda being done by the Government". In the sense of tendentious information compiled and distributed by an official agency—if that is a fair definition of propaganda—the news reels are not propaganda at all.

Effects of news reel publicity may be similar to those which the official propagandists hope to achieve but that does not make the news reels into propaganda.

British news reels have weighed in spontaneously with their contribution towards the national war effort under the same free impulse as inspires the popular press or the parish magazine.

I feel it is important to make this point about propaganda—a term of which film people before the war used to be scared but which has been converted since the war into a shibboleth. If the free man saying a good word for his country is labelled a propagandist instead of patriot, then patriotism is debased.

## Constraints of "Security"

News reels have fought for their freedom from Government control and will continue to uphold it. Certainly we have accepted the constraints required by "security". Censorship of material taken with Government facilities is accepted as a reasonable precaution against the exhibition of shots which might be of value to the enemy. Secrecy must veil much of the operations of Navy, Army and Air Force. In the same way, commentary on such subjects has to be carefully scrutinised. These are the natural inhibitions of war time.

On the other hand, the news reels cherish their right to voice opinions, and even criticism, which they feel that the public endorses, and have on several occasions exercised this right. The newspapers set a similar construction on their national responsibilities.

## Most Effective System

The reader of this article, assuming that he is of a contentious nature, is entitled at this stage to ask: "That's the present state of affairs, perhaps—but I am not convinced it is the one best calculated to help in winning the war."

I appreciate that this system, which derives from the democratic conception of life, is of course under fire from those who believe that we must fight totalitarian enemies with totalitarian organisations of our own.

But in the realm of news-giving, whether it be by newspapers, news reel or radio—by printed or spoken word or by picture—you are on delicate ground in trying to school the mental processes of a people born to freedom of thought.

The very fact that a man is in a privileged position to put over his opinions renders those opinions suspect until by various instructive tests the democratic public is convinced of their honesty.

Here are the words of the Ministry of Information commenting on the suggestion for a single Government controlled "British news reel service" in the Twelfth Report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure for the Current Session:

"The Ministry believes the policy of an 'official news reel service' to be mistaken because an official news reel is inevitably suspect".

It will be seen that the Ministry of Information itself has had the courage to repudiate the temptation of running its own completely controlled Propaganda Reel.

## Independent Endorsement

A Ministry of Propaganda would not only be alien to our conceptions but would prove ineffective in fact—because it would fail to convince. If all the agencies of news-giving were centralised under the direct control and controlling direction of the Government—that is, if they became official propaganda—then suspicion and doubt would surely grow in the minds of the public. The fact that a number of independent agencies, in which confidence through long experience has grown, endorse and corroborate the official attitude is at present an assurance to the public; remove this assurance and you remove the tests which the man in the street applies to his daily intake of "dope".

So the preservation of free and independent newspapers, and of free and independent news reels, renders this double service in wartime: they act as a check on the exuberance of official propagandists and serve as a guarantor to the public for the honesty of the news.

On this vital point, the genuineness of news, great issues hang. National morale depends on confidence in leaders. With the Germans we know that propaganda is easy. A gullible—or perhaps one should say, uncritical—race is never allowed to hear a viewpoint or a piece of information which fails to square with Nazi doctrine and policy. The Germans, who set little store by freedom of thought, accept this mental confinement. Among British peoples, on the other hand, democratic standards are ingrained and you must not only assert a fact but allay doubts and suspicions in order to convince.

## "Faking" and "Reconstruction"

I am going to deal with the thorny questions of "faking" and "reconstruction", and I want to make it clear as a start that the two terms are not identical. "Faking" is definitely an immoral practice; it is misrepresentation, and an effort to deceive the public—sinning against the doctrine which



I have tried to expound in this article. To show pictures of air raid damage in England, for instance, and represent them as havoc in Hamburg and Bremen would be an extreme case of "faking". A mild case would be to show soldiers on manoeuvres and to claim that they were the first pictures of actual fighting on some new front. The news reels have a conscience about such things. The other day some 16 millimetre film of the *Bismarck* engagement was sold to us. It was understood that the ship under fire on the horizon was the *Bismarck* herself. Stories were "built up" to the climax of these shots and commentaries dwelt on their dramatic character. Then someone had a doubt. The circumstances were investigated and it was decided that the ship in question could not be the *Bismarck*. Clearly the public interest in the picture was reduced to insignificance by this disclosure; there were reasonable arguments for "faking". But on such matters, particularly with a country at war, we are convinced that there is only one rule—the rule of strict honesty; and the commentaries were revised accordingly.

On the other hand, "reconstructions," where no authentic pictures exist, are legitimate—always provided that they are not represented as genuine. There were no films taken of the Battle of Matapan, but the reconstruction of this

action compiled from library shots of the vessels engaged, proved a stimulating little feature. Here was a legitimate case for reconstruction; Matapan was a victory—of which no film was taken—and no claim was made that the reconstruction was anything but a reconstruction.

### To Sum Up

I am going to summarise the points of this article, by way of conclusion:

- (1) The news reel, despite censorship, is still an independent purveyor of news and not an official propagandist;
- (2) as such, its contribution to the maintenance of public confidence is much more effective than if it were known to be Government-controlled;
- (3) the news reels believe that misrepresentation defeats its own object, even it be labelled "propaganda".

As a parting shot, let me say that I doubt the ability of a Government department to produce a news reel twice a week. Somehow or other, men of all the talents seem to find their faculties blunted and their initiative shackled when they get into a Government department. I shudder at the fantasy of conferences and committees poring over the bi-weekly gestation of a news reel.

## THE CANADIAN SCENE

By R. S. LAMBERT, the late Editor of "The Listener"

WAR HAS A curious effect on education, retarding and stimulating it at the same time. It retards education by checking normal expansion and diverting revenue to war purposes; on the other hand, those very war purposes under the name of propaganda include the cultivation of new educational techniques. So it is with the educational film in Canada to-day.

The governing factors of the situation are that Canada has no film industry of her own, and no national Education Department. The picture is therefore one of patchwork experiment and piecemeal progress. In the first place, the public cinema is entirely dominated by Hollywood. Canada is one of the smaller markets for the products of Hollywood, contributing four to five per cent of the total revenue of the United States producers. In 1939 the United States supplied over two-thirds of Canada's film imports—the United Kingdom only seven per cent. A large business is done in Canada making prints from American negatives for Canadian theatres; but even the distribution of theatrical films is largely controlled by American capital. The outstanding force in the Canadian motion picture theatrical world is Famous Players Canadian Corporation, which is controlled by a United States company, Paramount Pictures. The spread of the power of Famous Players illustrates the growth of monopolistic tendencies in the film field of Canada. Outwardly there remains an appearance of free competition; but in effect there is considerable restriction of competition by hidden agreements, holdings, associations and trade practices. Famous Players controls

a large group of theatres and is in a position to command first choice of the best pictures released by distributors in Canada.

All this means that Canadian film taste is standardised on the Hollywood pattern. The country has few theatres specialising in the exhibition of any particular type of film; none that make a point of exhibiting "unusual" films; and no news theatres. There are seven film societies catering for the minority of film-goers who want to see experimental films, but their future is somewhat precarious as their supply of films is drying up. There is no Film Institute, no provision for Sunday performances, no relaxation of the censorship for the experimental type of film.

### Grierson's Department

Canadian film production is limited to a few shorts and news reels. Commercially, most of these are produced by Associated Screen News of Montreal, which is also an offshoot of the Paramount combine. Apart from the entertainment film pure and simple, the production of documentary films has received a stimulus from the setting up of the National Film Board shortly before the War, in 1939. There previously existed the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, created to produce films which would advertise Canada's trade and tourist attractions abroad. But other Government Departments were already beginning to have films made to publicise their work; and the purpose of the National Film Board was to co-ordinate and develop *all* Canadian Government film activities. Under the able direction of John Grierson, as



Film Commissioner, the Film Board has played an active part in developing film propaganda for war purposes. The Film Board makes films for war information, for stimulation of tourism, and for vocational (especially Army) instruction. As a sideline, some of the material which is "shot" for other purposes, is used to make "educational" films. The main achievement of the Film Board in war propaganda has been a series called "Canada Carries On", consisting of productions or adaptations from Canadian, and sometimes from British material. Other films dealt with Army life, nature and scenery in Canada, and the life of the people in different Provinces. Most of the Film Board's films are produced by the Government Motion Picture Bureau; and they are distributed under contract by Columbia Pictures of Canada to nearly three-quarters of the total number of theatres in the Dominion. There is also a large non-theatrical distribution of these films, in 16 mm. size, partly through commercial operators and partly through road shows. The Board's films are also included in the programmes provided for soldiers in camps and barracks.

### **The National Film Society**

The National Film Board is too busy on Governmental publicity and propaganda work to be able to do much directly for education at this stage. Education is cared for principally by the National Film Society of Canada, a non-commercial, voluntary organisation, which is dependent upon grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and other sources. This Society has just secured a renewal of its Rockefeller grant, to enable it to continue its present activities until 1943. The Film Society carries on the work of supplying its branch film societies with material for their programmes, i.e. showings of foreign language documentary and education films. In addition, it has established a film library, with branches in eight of the nine Provinces, and has commenced the task of evaluating the existing supplies of educational films. Most of these (apart from the Film Board's documentaries) come from Britain and the United States. British educational films are handicapped, not only by distance and cost, but also by the fact that the English accent and intonation do not go down well in Canadian schools. American instructional films (such as those of Erpi) have therefore an advantage. However, the Film Society has now become the agent to the British Council for the distribution to schools of British documentary films. The Film Society's library now contains several hundred titles, and in the first five months of its operation, circulated 1,341 reels to a total audience of 177,000 people.

Education being a provincial responsibility in Canada, the use of films in schools varies widely from Province to Province. Allowing for differences of population, visual aids are, it is calculated, about four times more numerous in U.S. schools than in Canadian schools. Nevertheless, partly as a result of the efforts of the National Film Society, there is evidence of some progress. In Alberta, the Extension Department of the University has the biggest regional film library and the most extensive system of film distribution in the Dominion. There is now a projector available for every one of the forty-six school districts. In British Columbia, travelling film units, sent out by the University and the Vancouver School Board, reach every part of the Province. In Saskatchewan, Regina School Board now

shows films every week in each school under its authority. Films are also widely used in the Protestant schools in Quebec Province. The Quebec Education Department has established a library containing over thirty-thousand dollars worth of films, of which there has recently been published a handsome annotated catalogue. According to Dr. W. P. Percival, Director of Protestant Education, a large majority of Protestant High Schools in Quebec now possess film slide machines, delineascopes, silent and sound projectors; many intermediate and elementary schools also possess projectors; and a school (he says) can now obtain three silent or sound motion pictures per week throughout the school session for four or five years, before the complete collection will have been shown.

Most of the Provincial Departments of Education have now appointed Directors of Visual Education, who often combine with this function the direction of school broadcasts (if any). These posts are held by younger men who are slowly building up libraries and encouraging the use of films in their schools. Ontario remains one of the most backward Provinces in film education. A false start was made several years ago, when schools were equipped with a type of machine which later became obsolete. Ever since the failure of this false start, Ontario—the richest Province in Canada—has remained singularly cautious and unprogressive. The ice appeared about to break in the summer of 1939, when Dr. Cons visited Toronto, to hold a Summer School in Visual Education for Ontario teachers. He implanted seeds of enthusiasm, and a knowledge of technique. But since his return to England, little more has been done in Ontario, other than the establishment of a Provincial Film Library. In the whole of Canada up till now there has been no report published of any controlled experiment in the use of educational films in schools.

### **School Film Possibilities**

Yet there is no lack of effort to familiarise the general public, including teachers and parents, with the educational possibilities of the film in the classroom. Thus, during the past winter, the Home and School Association of Ontario has collaborated with the National Film Society and the Shell Oil Company of Canada, in showing programmes of educational films to some 7,000 adults and over 14,000 children in Ontario. Again, during the past few months, there has been founded in Ottawa a Council of Education for Citizenship, which seeks (among other objects) to promote the use of documentary films for teaching citizenship. The progress of school broadcasting in Canada is also likely to have a stimulating effect on the use of films. Gradually, each of the nine Provinces is either establishing its own system of school broadcasting, or participating in a Regional system. At the same time, from the United States, the Columbia Broadcasting system is turning its "American School of the Air" into a system of school broadcasting, including Canada (through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). In this case much stress is laid upon associating suitable films with the radio programmes. As yet, however, not enough work has been done in Canada on relating closely instructional films to the actual classroom curriculum, or in evaluating and criticising the available material in accordance with this need. And while the equipment of schools with projectors is proceeding steadily, no great forward move can be looked for until the War is over.



# Herman G. Weinberg writes from New York

THE CROP OF current films on view in New York has for the first time since anyone can remember less to do with "boy meets girl" than with national and international problems. Only Orson Welles' rather curious hodge-podge of cinematic tricks, gleaned from the most superficial aspects of the work of Murnau, Lang, Chaplin and von Stroheim, has stirred both the public and the critics, among the non-political, non-sociological films. *Citizen Kane*, for all its laudable attempt to blaze a new trail in the cinematic forest, is a disconcerting mixture of cold virtuosity and empty pyrotechnics. "What does it profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul?" asks Welles. But one remains strangely unmoved by his answer, after his cinema bewitchment has passed. There is more humanness and warmth in any scene between Mizzi and Nikki in von Stroheim's *The Wedding March*, or between Joan Bennet and Walter Pidgeon in Lang's *Man Hunt*, than in the whole of *Citizen Kane*. Welles is a bright young man but you have to have a heart to make a good film. The promise is there but let the promise be fulfilled before the critics confound all the canons of proportion with indiscriminate hosannahs of praise.

## 'Man Hunt'

Fritz Lang's *Man Hunt*, for instance, proves that the velvet glove in the hand of steel cannot be acquired by child-prodigies, but only by an artist steeped deeply in life. The master of the criminal-film (*Spies*, "M", *The Last Testament of Dr. Mabuse*), Lang has taken the familiar pattern of "the chase" and revived its well-known formula to a startling degree by setting the action in Germany and England just before the outbreak of the present war. A British sportsman and big-game hunter, visiting Berschtesgaden, toys with stalking Hitler in his lair. From a ledge on a high rock overlooking the terrace of the Führer's mountain aviary, he centres Hitler in the gun-sight of his precision rifle. He pulls the trigger, there is an empty click. He knew his gun was unloaded. Now he places a cartridge in the gun, takes careful aim once more, dead-centres his gun-sight on Hitler's left breast and slowly curls his forefinger around the trigger again. At that moment an "Elite" guard jumps on him and knocks him out. A prisoner in the vast and gloomy mountain lodge, he is cross-examined by an officer of the Gestapo who smiles sardonically at the Englishmen's protestations that he was just stalking Hitler and had no intention of pulling the trigger. "Like big game, you know. A real hunter doesn't kill for the sake of killing," the Englishman says. "There's sport in stalking your prey, knowing you've got him, and just your will and self-control are between you and the death of the animal. It isn't necessary to kill him. Technically, you have achieved it. There's no fun in the actual killing." But the Gestapo would like to turn this episode into an incident for their forthcoming *White Paper* and so the Englishman is given his alternative of signing a confession that he attempted to assassinate Hitler with the approval of his government, or suffer the tortures of the

Gestapo. Needless to say, the paper is not signed, the Englishman escapes, after having been left for dead, makes his way to London and there follows the chase by the Gestapo through the streets and undergrounds of London. (This sequence is in the best Fritz Lang vein—there is no one who has his uncanny sense of the terrifying aspect of mundane things under extraordinary circumstances.) The scenes between the English sportsman and the pretty little prostitute who, through chance, is instrumental in saving his life, achieve a tenderness rare even for Lang. But the Englishman escapes his pursuers, though they have stalked and killed his pretty little girl-friend, and when the Nazi invasion of Poland is announced, he joins up with the R.A.F. on a bombing expedition over Germany, baling out near Berchtesgaden again, with his precision rifle and gun-sight, which as the off-screen voice says "takes great skill to use, but now he will use it and pull the trigger because now he knows that there is more than the sport of stalking this monster that is involved".

The direction is taut and sure, exhibiting a control over player and scene that is a joy to watch. One steps from Carol Reed to Hitchcock to Lang in achieving the goal of films in this genre—but that last step is a big one.

As for the rest, the most interesting developments, with one or two unique exceptions, are also anti-Nazi. Lilian Hellman's successful play dealing with the underground Anti-Nazi movement in Germany, *Watch on the Rhine*, will be filmed, probably by Samuel Goldwyn, and Lubitsch will do Clare Boothe's satirical comedy on Nazi consular agents in America, *Margin For Error*, for the screen. Capra's *Meet John Doe* was interesting only for its first unhedging portrait of an American fascist, though the whole film fell stupidly to pieces when the fascist "saw the light" and reformed, since this mitigated against the whole point of the film which was a re-statement of the democratic principle and a denunciation of the fascist ideology. Capra will really have to make up for this one. *Sergeant York* will show the conversion of a "conscientious objector" into a militant fighter for democracy, and the proposed film to be produced by Seymour Nebenzahl from an original story by your correspondent and Leo Lania (scenarist of Pabst's *Dreigroschenoper*) will show the similar conversion of an "isolationist" into a militant interventionist. The pattern has been set, for all time, by Pudovkin's classic picturization of Gorky's story, *Mother*. Let the lesson be learned for the urgency is great.

## Pascal's Success

Gabriel Pascal's film of Shaw's *Major Barbara* is delighting New York, not the least delightful aspect of the film being the witty foreword spoken by G.B.S., himself, to American audiences. "You have sent us your old destroyers—in return I am sending you my old plays. . . ." And so on. Pascal plans to do either *The Millionaires*, *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* or *Arms and the Man*. Following this, he will definitely bring to the screen



*St. Joan*. He has announced Paul Gallico's *The Snow Goose*, a lyrical episode based on an incident during the evacuation of Dunkirk, as his next picture. All of these films will be produced by him in his new Canadian studios.

That leaves four items: Disney's forthcoming *The Reluctant Dragon*, in which Robert Benchley will appear, supplementing the cartoon characters—an innovation, even for the incredible Disney; Capra's proposition to Chaplin to play the lead in his film of Eric Knight's *The Flying Yorkshireman*, which, as last reports, Chaplin was seriously considering; the discovery of a Mexican Chaplin, named Cantinflas, over the border, whose latest film, *Ni Sangre, Ni Arena* (which translates into *Neither Blood, Nor Sand*) is said to be an hilarious parody of bullfighters; and Fritz

Lang's next film which is reputed to be the much-discussed story *Confirm or Deny*.

Before closing, mention should be made of some of the extraordinary uses of sound and image in Mamoulian's disturbing version of Ibanez' *Blood and Sand*; *Ku Kan*, the anti-Japanese film which Rey Scott brought back from China; and the series of British Defence Films now showing with great success at the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

A Nazi Messerschmitt, brought down by the R.A.F. over England, is currently on view here for 25 cents a look, for the benefit of "Bundles for Britain." It is by far the biggest quarter's worth in the New York field of entertainment.

June 15 1941

# CREDO OF A CRITIC

Dilys Powell, of the "Sunday Times," says how she judges films

SOME YEARS ago a French critic defined the novel as "a fiction in prose of a certain length". One might define the film (I speak of the feature film and not of the documentary) as a fiction in cinematography of an uncertain length. We ask of the film many of the things that we ask of the novel: the presentation of credible human beings, the reflection of credible human actions; by experience, however, we learn that certain aspects of life—the gradual development of a character, the complexities of normal as well as abnormal psychology—still evade the grasp of the cinema. Here it differs from the modern novel, which has made itself master of precisely those fields; to a still more pronounced degree it differs from the stage drama. Opponents of the cinema—æsthetic opponents, that is—generally dislike it because they expect it to achieve the same results or to proceed by the same means as the two other chief forms of story-telling. They expect it to be, like the modern novel, a study of character; or, like the stage drama, a fiction in dialogue.

## Motion Writing

Cinematography: motion-writing—the film, is, as its name says, story-telling by motion. It begins as something to be looked at, only in its later stages does it become also something to be heard. The critic who takes the cinema seriously, in fact, is bound to begin by asking himself: is this film a good *picture*? Are its component parts well-related and well-proportioned? Are its light and shade so handled as to give the best emphasis to its subject? Does the background contribute to the interest of the figures or is it merely a distraction? In short, is the picture interesting and beautiful? This brings up an old red herring: haven't you, says the reader, praised films in which there were no "beautiful" effects of lighting, no "beautiful" compositions, no "beautiful" shots at all? The answer to this is that certain subjects require treatment which would not be beautiful if applied to other subjects; the mistake is to demand a single standard of "beauty".

One of the recent Dietrich films, *Seven Sinners*, had a banal story, conventional acting, and direction which, though exceedingly competent, was not distinguished by imagination. The piece was, however, interesting for its photography; the photography, in fact, made the film. Rudolph Mate, the cameraman (and cameraman, years ago in France, of *The Passion of Joan of Arc*), had given it a kind of soft, brilliant sensuousness: lace casting trellises and points of shade over the pure line of cheek and jaw; light forcing its way in from the bright southern night to bar the figure of the woman coming into the tenanted room; everywhere the effect of light, but light demonstrated through its opposite, through shadow. There were scores of beautiful shots in the film; yet I should not have called it a beautiful film. But a film such as *Primrose Path*, handling material which in itself is often squalid or dreary, confers beauty on that material. Or consider the last Garson Kanin film seen in this country, *They Knew What They Wanted*. Remembering it, I recall no outstandingly beautiful scene—beautiful, that is, in the way in which many sequences in *Seven Sinners* were beautiful: no memorable effects of lighting, no shots which, detached from their context, would still give acute æsthetic pleasure. But the film as a whole struck me as a beautiful film. It was beautiful for its proportions; one might almost say its architecture. The contrast, at the beginning of the story, of the rich, sunny, featureless Californian vineyards with the steamy, crowded restaurant where the girl works, huddled together with a brood of gigglers; the simple gaiety, primitive, almost tribal, of the festa before her marriage on the ranch; the slowness and darkness and bitter expectancy of the day of waiting after the accident to the bridegroom; and the return in the last sequence, after the breaking of the human storm, to the landscape theme, not featureless now, but superbly alive with promise of the lifting of darkness and the rising of the sun—the tale is built, not as a series of sequences and shots, but as an organic whole; scene springs from scene, mood grows out of mood, the film has the



beauty of development and carefully adjusted relation between figures and background.

These qualities are present in the good novel; they are present in the good play. But the film has something which the stage has to only an extremely limited extent: movement. The pictures are not static, they move: the figures move, the camera moves, even the background moves. When in *They Knew What They Wanted* the Italian ranch-owner, at the height of the festa, falls from the roof-tree and is dangerously hurt, the carousers crowd round him and push to the door of the house where he is carried. The camera adds to this confused, excited movement a large, urgent movement of its own: beginning by looking at a small group of people standing on the edge of the crowd and beyond them into the darkness, it swings rapidly back to the major scene, takes in the jostling, frightened mass of people, follows them as they surge round the house to the door and the windows and looks as anxiously as they, and with as fleeting a glance, into the lighted room. The spectator of the film is at once identified with the actors and distinguished from them, he moves with them, he sees what they see, while at the same time he looks from outside at their actions. This double motion, this movement of the actors in the film combined with the movement of the camera (and consequently of the audience, which looks with the camera's eyes) is of course something possible to the cinema only; it is one of the most important elements in cinema technique.

### Camera Movement

When we say that movement is essential to the film we do not mean, then, merely action within the story; we mean camera-action too. Sometimes the sense of movement is obtained by cutting, by putting together a series of momentary shots; sometimes a film in which both characters and camera are comparatively static may be given movement by the handling of the background; in *The Lady Eve*, for instance, during long colloquies in which the chief players scarcely move, the eye is saved from tedium by unobtrusive movement in the background—stewards coming and going, passengers walking the decks; in one scene by the flashing of an electric sign.

This is not to say that all movement in the cinema is good, aesthetically speaking. Stage comedies are often full of movement but in so that the audience shall not get tired of seeing the actor too long in the same place: the heroine gets up in the middle of a conversation, walks across the room and sits down on another chair for no apparent reason. Some of this meaningless movement is occasionally transferred to the screen; it soon betrays itself by its lack of visual design. For the critic looks for a third element in the cinema; after composition, by which the putting together of the whole picture as well as the pictorial quality of single scenes is meant, after movement, he looks for design: moving design. Disney, who has a control over his material which the director of the realistic film cannot attain, is a master of moving design; the submarine scenes in *Pinocchio* with the rainbow sea-creatures darting and turning are evidence enough of that. The masterpieces of the German non-realistic cinema, again, were examples of the use of moving design; the worker in *Metropolis*, for instance, spread-eagled at the machine, tugging the hands round the vast dial, and the dejected figures dragging by with the bodies of their comrades; or the sleep-walker in

*Caligari*, running up the painted path by the skeleton tree. But in realistic films which are not machine-made moving design is still an important part of the handling of the story. A great deal of the emotional impact of *Of Mice and Men*, was owed to its lovely rural designs: men and mules moving slowly across the fields, and the hands coming in from work, and the tragedy of sad, doomed lives played out against the pattern of leaves and branches.

### Equating Emotion

The mention of emotion may lead the reader to ask the critic, very reasonably, whether, if he examines every film in the light of these requirements, he allows himself any emotional reactions at all. What about the emotional effects, for instance, of plot and acting? And what is the part of the director in all this?

I have not the space to discuss here the question of film acting, so different from stage acting as to be hardly acting at all in the theatrical sense. But I have long thought that, whereas on the stage the actor is supremely important, on the screen he takes second place to the director, sometimes also to the cameraman. The director it is who can make a tawdry bit of dialogue appear worthy and a literary bit of dialogue appear natural, the director who sees a story as an entity to be translated into the medium of the cinema, the medium of moving pictures; the director, in short, who gives a film the integrity of a fine piece of craftsmanship, or at best the individuality of a work of art. No work of art exists without betraying to some extent the personality of the artist. If the personality of the artist is distasteful to the critic then his work may be distasteful too; but that is not to say that the critic will not recognise it for what it is. No critic examines a work of art, whether it is a book, a play, a painting, a piece of sculpture or a film, entirely without yielding to his personal emotional reactions. But if he is indeed a critic his reactions are conditioned by its aesthetic qualities: in the cinema by the very qualities of composition, movement and design which when set down in print appear so far removed from emotion. And it is only by learning to appreciate those qualities that the audience can experience fully the emotions which it is the aim of the film to communicate.

---

MARY FIELD, J. V. Durden and Percy Smith are the joint editors of "Cine-Biology," a new Pelican book. It is written, as the foreword states, so as to give cinema audiences all over the world who see and enjoy the *Secrets of Life* series, an idea of the natural processes of which they have had a glimpse on the screen. "Cine-Biology" therefore is not a biological textbook though it has perforce to use many technical terms which the authors make every effort to explain and even add a glossary at the end. All the creatures covered in the book naturally have been dealt with in one or other of the films of the series.

The text shows the signs of the several hands that have been at work. The literary style must be ascribed to Mary Field, the biological explanations to J. V. Durden, and the charming reminiscences to Percy Smith, to whom alone of the trio can with certainty be ascribed the statement that the Brown Hydra is "an ideal pet"; and the philosophical thought, à propos of the conjugation of *paramecium*, . . . "Men have died and worms have eaten them but not for love."

Sixpence well spent!



# FILMS OF THE QUARTER

*Reviewed by Evelyn Russell*

WE HAVE HEARD only too often lately, in connection with graver matters than those with which we are here concerned, the phrase, "They're grand, but there aren't enough of them."

The same must be said of British films. It is disappointing, to say the least of it, to find the number issued during the last quarter so lamentably small. There is, perhaps, some slight compensation in the quality of that few, which includes *Love on the Dole*. In the direction of this film by John Baxter there is a touch that indicates a deep and urgent interest in *οἱ πολλοί* that should be nursed and sustained by those who have the development of the film industry in this country at heart. It is a grim film, dealing as it does with after-war depression in Lancashire, but it is magnificently acted and unusual attention has been paid to the make-up and direction of the crowd. Geoffrey Hibbert, a new-comer to the screen, as the young Harry Hardcastle, gives a performance equal to that of any one of the many distinguished West End stage artists with whom he is associated in the film. He looks young enough to be exempt from sterner work for a little time yet, and should quickly be given further opportunities to prove his capabilities.

## Praise for Newton

If, however, any prizes are to be given for fine acting in this country, Robert Newton should receive the highest possible award for his interpretation of the part of the bully, Bill Walker, in *Major Barbara*, Bernard Shaw's famous comedy. It is interesting to have yet another of this author's plays so memorably recorded for posterity.

I wonder if American audiences will be as puzzled by *Major Barbara* as I do not doubt British audiences will be by *Tobacco Road*. The characters and conditions depicted in the latter do exist, I understand, in America as those depicted in *Major Barbara* basically do here. Maybe it is a question of direction and production, and Gabriel Pascal has succeeded where John Ford, in spite of a certain distinction, has not.

It has been my lot to see a number of thrillers this quarter, but for the life of me as I write, the only one I can remember in detail is *This Man is Dangerous*, which is British, and directed by Lawrence Huntington. Why do I remember that one? I think it is because, in spite of any shortcomings that carping criticism might reveal, it really has as many thrills and exciting situations well handled in it as any film-goer can take in one sitting. It opens well, there is suspense from the beginning until the final dénouement, and I can only assume it was lack of funds that allowed Lawrence Huntington to use a static background in an otherwise excellent river-barge sequence.

Walter Forde, on the other hand, has permitted no interference with true illusion in his direction of *Atlantic Ferry*. His reproduction of sailing conditions during the early part of last century, of storms at sea, of the first steamship engines are most convincing and I cannot agree with

the well-known Sunday newspaper critic who thinks it his business to point out how the wheels are made to go round to obtain these excellent results. Those of us who know, can forget while watching this film and those who don't know may prefer to keep their illusions.

More years ago than I care now to remember, "Kipps" by Mr. H. G. Wells, was given me, and it became for me almost a bedside book. Its characters are friends of mine and physically they would be recognisable should I meet them in the street. There must be many film-goers who feel the same about way *Kipps*, and it was a risky experiment to cast Michael Redgrave as the hero in the film version of the novel. Yet so well is this story of a simple soul unfolded under the direction of Carol Read that any preconceived ideas of the physical appearance of Kipps, or of any of the other characters for that matter, can be put aside without regret. Mr. Wells himself could have created no more charming an Anne Pornick than that portrayed by Phyllis Calvert, and Edward Rigby is Buggins of the Bazaar at Folkestone.

For comedy and humour we have had to rely upon American productions this quarter, and I must say I found *Married—but Single* an enjoyable piece of entertainment. But then Melvyn Douglas and Rosalind Russell are the chief protagonists and experts at the game.

There was, too, *My Lady Eve*, a most amusing comedy with a brilliant performance by Barbara Stanwyck as the vamp, and witty, urban *Come Live with Me* for those who prefer to smile rather than to guffaw. Hats off to Clarence Brown, who so cleverly directed a plot with no single unfamiliar feature.

## Poor Stuff

But if someone could tell me why, taking it by and large, America is sending us such a large percentage of indifferent, undistinguished films, I should be more than grateful. They have over the other side all the material and the money and have not, up to the time of writing, any war conditions seriously to interrupt their productions. Yet we are expected to buy cheerfully film after film that is at best second rate and that is being complimentary. *Barneyard Follies*, for example. Why not make a ten minute short of the Cackle Sisters and the *Kidooders* and leave it at that? *Love Thy Neighbour*, *Melody and Moonlight*, *Melody for Three*—films with music and little else to commend them. Pedestrian Westerns like *Melody Ranch* with Gene Autrey, bored as ever, though polished up a bit, ambling through. *The Trail of the Vigilantes*, *Heroes of the Saddle*, *Two Roads*, and so on. Not one red-blooded, he-man, two-gun Bill outfit amongst them. Have "Westerners" become vegetarians and anæmic? One small boy remarked plaintively to me quite lately, "They aren't real cow-boys any more, are they"? Maybe the breed is dying out, which is a pity.

Even *Boom Town*, with its four stars—Spencer Tracey, Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert and Hedy Lemarr—its



excellent photography and a strong dramatic story, is spoiled by its length. Had it been cut by a third it would have been twice as effective.

Do American producers imagine that because stars are employed in a film it must *ipso facto* be a success? *Back Street*, for example, in which romantic convention is drawn out to such an extent as to be almost insufferable. Charles Boyer and Margaret Sullavan are the stars, but that is not enough. *Boy's Town*, too, so full of bathos as to be nauseating, but featuring that fine artist, Spencer Tracey and Mickey Rooney, and therefore splurged all over the place as stupendous.

Carelessness in details of production, too, is becoming more and more noticeable. A telephone, for example, should not be taken up before it rings, as happens in *Federal Fugitives*, nor the participants in a cellar chase so obviously wait for direction in moving from pillar to post. This is a

P.R.C. production and I am reduced to the conclusion that this company's work is in the nature of a try-out. All right, but I see no reason why we over here should be the dog on which to make the experiment.

*Rage in Heaven* moved me to tears—of rage on earth. The English settings of a mansion and a Court were grotesque. Even in *Hudson's Bay*, excellent entertainment though this film is, the English sequences in which King Charles appear are somewhat comic. And who provided some of the wigs? Are viewers supposed to turn a blind eye or, seeing, train themselves to disregard this slipshod work?

There is no space to talk about the other score or so American films I have seen since our last issue, which is perhaps just as well, for I could only enlarge on the simple theme, "They are not good, and there are far too many of them."

**FORSYTH HARDY writes:**

## An Open Letter to the Film Societies

IT IS SURPRISING but also heartening to learn that film societies are actively preparing for their third war-time season. Not many foresaw this possibility in September, 1939, when it seemed almost certain that film societies, in common with other cultural bodies, would be sucked into the whirlpool of war and destroyed. But sufficient of the societies have survived to prove the virility of the movement and to suggest that it has won a permanent place among the country's cultural organisations.

War-time operation has meant many peculiar difficulties, including film shortage, transport problems, loss of personnel, increased running costs, and reduced memberships. In this coming third season these difficulties are not likely to diminish. As most of them depend on local circumstances, it is not possible to offer generalised advice. Film supply and programme building, however, are matters which affect all societies equally and I intend to confine myself to these.

The import of foreign-language films ceased with the fall of France. There is, therefore, no convenient stream of films passing to the societies by way of the specialised cinemas in London. What are they to do? Some of the societies may not have exhausted the considerable store of films in this country when war broke out. The most recent importations included Duvivier's *La Charrette Fantôme*, interesting but not outstanding; *Nous les Jeunes*, by Jean Benoit-Lévy and Marie Epstein, which, despite its weaknesses, has a strong human appeal; *Le Dernier Tourant*, Pierre Chenal's version of "The Postman Always Rings Twice"; and Sacha Guitry's *Its Etaient Neuf Celebataires*. With *Accord Final* and Chevalier's *Pièges*, societies have a possible reservoir of films which, though few are in the front rank, are good enough to provide the basis for a season.

### Try Silents

There are several other sources open to societies which are not afraid of experiment. The National Film Library has been steadily adding to its loan section and the famous feature films available on 35 mm. include, *Nanook*, *Caligari*,

*Metropolis*, *Berlin* and *The Last Laugh*. The Jannings film, incidentally, was given a week's run at the Cosmo in Glasgow during June—an experiment which should shame the more timid societies into action. *The Last Laugh* does not suffer through being run at talkie speed and its running-time on this basis is 73 mins. *Film and Reality*, the newly-completed nine reel survey of the realist cinema with excerpts from many of the most notable documentaries, will be eagerly welcomed by societies. It will facilitate the kind of educational work which some of the more progressive societies have been trying to do in a necessarily haphazard manner.

Another important source is the Film Society's collection of features and shorts. These have been rescued from the curiously inaccessible vaults in which they appeared to lie, and the list reveals interesting possibilities. The features include *Pred Maturitou*, a ten-reel Czech film of 1932 which, though leisurely in development, has excellent pictorial and dramatic qualities; *Sabra* (Poland, 1933) which describes the lives of the Jewish pioneers who have left their countries—mainly Russia and Poland—and settled in Palestine; *Itto* (France, 1934), a story based on an episode of the French "pacification" of Morocco and filmed in the Atlas Mountains by Jean Benoit-Lévy and Marie Epstein; Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante*; *Voyage au Congo*, by Marc Allegret and André Gide; and Wilfred Basse's documentary, *Deutschland Zwischen Gestern und Heute*, which received a Venice award in 1934.

### The Film Society List

There are many fascinating titles among the short films in the Film Society's list. I have space to mention only a few which may serve to incite curiosity: Germaine Dulac's *Sea Shell and the Clergyman*; *Rain* and *The Bridge* by Joris Ivens; *Tusalava*, Len Lye's early experimental film; Ruttman's *In Der Nacht*; Lotte Reiniger's *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*; *The Idea*, from the woodcuts of Frans Masereel; and *How Bronco Billy left Bear County*, a silent film included in the Film Society's first programme on October 25th, 1925. A judicious selection from this



wealth of interesting material would certainly add richness and fascination to a film society season.

Specially composed programmes devoted to a single theme represent another avenue for experiment. Last season the Edinburgh Film Guild arranged several national programmes and found most of them well received. A Dutch programme included *Netherlands Old and New*, *Behind the Dykes* and *Dood Water*, Czechoslovakia was represented by *The Rape of Czechoslovakia* and *Reka* and Poland by Polish news reels, *This is Poland* and *The Day of the Great Adventure*. These programmes involve considerable research, but they represent a praiseworthy war-time development. There are many other possible unifying themes: films during the last war; how Britain is showing her face on foreign screens; a programme on post-war planning. Film societies in England might consider showing a Scottish programme, composed of *Edge of the World* and some of

the *Films of Scotland* Committee's excellent shorts.

The British Council has a number of short films which, produced primarily for foreign distribution, are available for non-theatrical showing in this country. These may help to solve one pressing problem of programme building: a supply of fresh short films which are not seen in the ordinary cinemas. *The City*, the notable American film on town-planning, is in this country and other American documentaries which may reach Britain during the coming season include Flaherty's film on agriculture. Len Lye's *Musical Poster* is available.

If societies show resource and initiative, it should not prove difficult to arrange a season which will effectively maintain the tradition of the movement. Those societies which continue their activities will, by stimulating the mind and reviving the spirit, make a valuable contribution to the maintenance of morale during what is certain to be a difficult winter.

## NAZI PLANS\*

WAR HAS proved no obstacle to the German film industry, in forcing Axis ideologies, reports received in Washington and New York from Berlin and the occupied countries of Europe indicate. The Nazi official cinema trust is said to be producing more pictures than ever, and is exhibiting propaganda-laden pictures throughout France, Norway, Denmark and the Reich. The Germans are also exerting considerable effort to export films, particularly to South America, and are producing special news reels and Spanish language films for overseas consumption.

Nazi efforts to control native producing companies in the Argentine were reported by *Motion Picture Herald* on February 22nd in a report by Natalio Bruski, Buenos Aires correspondent. Banco Germanico, Agfa, Siemens Schubert and other German financial and equipment houses in South America by extending liberal credits, and in some cases forcing bankruptcy action, are securing decisive voice in the control of Latin American producers such as Sono Film, SIDE, PAF, and Tecnograf, Senor Bruski reported.

### Cool Reception.

Reception of the Nazi film fare in subject territories has not been warm, uncensored reports indicate. Norwegian boycott of the German theatre in Oslo, Stavenger, Trondheim and Lillehammer has brought a German warning that other taxes will be increased if revenue from motion picture houses continues to drop. Similar situations are reported from France, Holland, and Denmark.

A strict code of behaviour is prescribed by the Germans for theatre audiences. It prohibits "laughter, meaningless applause, stamping with the feet, coughing and clearing the throat, whistling or vociferous comment". Where reception of the "enlightenment" films is particularly cool, house lights must be kept on, and at Oslo, Paris, and other large cities uniformed police attend every performance. Theatre audiences remain small, except for the free attendance of German soldiers and officers, it is said.

\*Reprinted from the "*Motion Picture Herald*," of April 26th, 1941.

Although the war ended production in the occupied territories, the Reich cinema trust claims to have increased production during the past year. Representatives here and in Berlin claim a record year for UFA, Tobis, and the German theatre operators. There are 7,000 theatres operating in Germany and the Eastern provinces and licences have been granted to an additional 1,002 houses in "the newly acquired territories", according to a spokesman in New York.

UFA, largest German producing unit, in a statement released in Berlin recently, called the fiscal year 1939-40 one of the best in its career. It reported a gross of 166,180,000 marks for 1940 against 142,410,000 marks in 1938-39, with a net profit of 1,700,000 marks in 1940 compared with 470,000 marks for the previous year.

Spokesmen here attributed better picture business in Germany to patronage during the blackout and to extensive newsreel coverage of the war by cameramen of the Reich Army's official "Pressekompanie". A unit of reporters, still and motion picture cameramen is assigned to each regiment and naval unit, and is responsible for full coverage of all action.

Last year UFA produced 27 feature pictures, three less than in the previous year; one full length foreign language (Spanish) film against six the year before; eighteen shorts, an increase of three; 32 educational and cultural films, an increase of four; 22 foreign language culture films, a decrease of ten; 87 industrial films against 125 the year before, and the same number of newsreels, 156. Military news reels are released weekly, with more frequent issues during active campaigns.

### Future Production Plans

Production plans for the coming year, according to an announcement relayed to the German Library of Information in New York by DNB, the official German news outlet, call for 110 feature productions during 1940-41. UFA will produce 34, Tobis 34, Terra 24 and Bavaria Films 18.



The dispatch also mentions twenty films to be produced jointly by German and Italian companies. There is no description of their subject, or production locale, nor any mention of the joint Axis picture plans later than last November. Presumably production has been halted by the course of the Italian military campaign.

Kurt Hubert, export director of Tobis films, in a German short wave broadcast in English last Fall claimed that German studios were expanding, and estimated that one hundred feature films have been produced in the Reich since the outbreak of the war. A transcript of the broadcast, aimed at American listeners, was obtained from the German Library of Information, subsidised Nazi information centre in New York. Approximately 200 cultural short subjects were produced in Germany since the outbreak of war according to Mr. Hubert. They dealt with "natural science, architecture, travel, and expeditions in foreign countries". Many were translated for the export trade.

"The type of educational films showing scenes of life and training of our boys for the army, navy and air force with all their newest equipment, tanks, submarines, stukas and so forth and so on are extremely popular," Mr. Hubert said in the broadcast.

German news reels which have been combined for the export trade into such propaganda pictures as *Baptism of Fire* and *Victory in the West* are filmed entirely by the regular army cameramen in the course of duty, Mr. Hubert declared. "They are regular soldiers, doing a soldier's full duty, always in the first lines . . . this explains the realistic pictures which we show, and which have given millions the thrill of their lives, and an idea of the grim reality of war," the Tobis director told American short-wave listeners. He cited the spectacular films of the attack on the Westernplatte near Danzig, the attack at Maas, the meeting in Compiègne and occupation of Paris as examples of the ubiquity of Pressekompanie cameramen.

### Prepared in 16 Languages

Export versions of the official Nazi pictures are prepared at Berlin by the Ministry of Information. Titles and sound track are translated into 16 different languages and reels up to 3,000 feet in length are exported as what Mr. Hubert classified as a "perfect document of historical truth and nothing but the truth, therefore answering the German demand for a good substantial report in every way".

The films are circulated throughout Europe, and in South and Central America and the Far East. The UFA office in New York reports that, despite blockade difficulties, a German film reaches this country on an average of once every two weeks.

Dialogue is not translated into English and distribution is limited to about a dozen local houses in German-American neighbourhoods. Two theatres in the Yorkville section of New York, four in Brooklyn, two in New Jersey and houses in Milwaukee, Chicago, San Francisco and Buffalo regularly show German news reels, while theatres in other cities with a German section show the films occasionally. Approximately 32 features in German were brought into the country last year, according to George Nitze, director of UFA's American office. A few of the pictures received English subtitles but most were exhibited in the original German. Little theatres specialising in French and other foreign pictures do not handle the German product.

## A NEW BOOK

A new book on films at this time is sufficiently rare to be welcome in any event. Mr. Carrick's book\* is a new addition to one of those indispensable reference books which any film enthusiast, and above all any amateur, will want to consult constantly.

Mr. Carrick's approach to his subject is throughout governed by two cardinal convictions. One is a fervent belief in the potentialities of the film as an art medium. "Don't come into films at all," he says, "unless you are going to help wholeheartedly to make it the greatest medium of expression man ever has had." The second is a belief in the supreme importance of patiently-won technical skill which he expresses through the following quotation from Leopold Eidlitz, "Art appeals to the emotions, but it is not produced by emotions, feelings, sentiment, mannerism, or at Carlyle has it, by modern dilettanteism of any kind, but by the cunning, the craft, the skill of art. It is the result only of sober, cool, intelligent thought, and of technical knowledge, which is acquired only by hard, persevering and long continued labour."

### The Art Director's Art

As to criticisms, the chapter on "How a Film is Made" might perhaps have been more aptly titled, since it deals expressly with the art director's relationships to the various stages of production. Here the author suggests the proper field of study for the would-be art director.

"It is more important for the art director to have the history of the social development of Europe and America at his fingertips than to know how to make a perfect drawing of, say, a Corinthian column. Corinthian columns can be found by the score in any book on architecture, but when and where to use them so that they look in their proper place only comes through a knowledge of the people who use them."

This statement is supported by a comparison of illustrations showing, as Mr. Carrick emphasises, that the more "arty" the design, the less value is it likely to have as a basis for the construction of the actual set. All the illustrations, which show both designs and actual sets, are admirably selected and juxtaposed for comparative purposes.

The chapter on "Designing, Drawing and Planning" is full of good sound advice and that on "Departments, Materials, Effects", deals with the carpenter's shop and paint shop, with backings, glass shots, model shots, the Dunning and Schufftun processes; split-malt shots, photographic backgrounds, the plaster shop and the property room; and finally he describes in detail how such effects as wind, snow, rain, fires, cobwebs, age-worn timbers, antique furniture and many others can be produced.

There are certain points, in the first and more general part of the book, where Mr. Carrick appears to me to fall into error. The first chapter: "The Growth of a New Art", for example, contains historical references not entirely accurate. These, however, are minor points taken from a part of the book which is one-tenth of the whole. In the remaining nine-tenths dealing with his own work, Mr. Carrick writes with the indisputable authority of a practising craftsman with thirteen years of experience in films behind him.

Primarily this book is meant for the practising craftsman, but almost anyone who has any interest in films or filmmaking from whatever angle, will find it absorbing reading.

E. H. L.

\* *Designing for the Moving Picture*. Edward Carrick. Studio Press. 8s. 6d.



# CELLULOID & BATTLE DRESS

WILLIAM E. DICK, who writes this article, has recently been invalided out of the R.A.S.C. The new army films go far to meet his suggestions

BRITAIN depends very largely on a hurriedly conscripted army which is to a large extent *amateur*, and *speed* of training becomes essential. Otherwise it has to expend its early energy and enthusiasm on a series of purely defensive "rearguard" actions, from which it is not always possible to derive lessons which will be useful when the time comes to attack. Film could do much to make military training at once more realistic, more up to date and more deep.

Let me quote from my own experiences. Most of my time was spent in the R.A.S.C. Every R.A.S.C. clerk would agree that the details of such a subject as "Supplying an army in the field" are hard to grasp; and yet the closer one gets to the detail the harder the subject *as a whole* becomes.

What is needed, therefore, is a *dynamic* picture of the whole procedure of supplying an army in the field. The idea is certainly a dynamic one. The movement of supplies—petrol, "ammo", and food—from base to battlefield. Supplies being unloaded from ships; transferred by rail; distributed by road. Rumbling lorries; mobilising into convoys, moving towards the front, shepherded by D.R.s; convoys under attack by enemy dive-bombers—the vehicles and men dispersed under cover, Bren guns flaring into action. There is no doubt about its documentary possibilities. But something more than that is needed. For training purposes a great many routine points would need emphasis. Maintenance of vehicles; the technique of mobilising a convoy and shepherding the moving convoy; the disposition of a convoy to offer the least possible target to the enemy; whether it is better for the vehicles to move, spaced apart at regular intervals, or to move in small groups of varying numbers at different distances apart. All these points require the hand of a film director used to making instructional films. In fact, using all available techniques of instructional film I doubt whether there are any details (apart from form-filling in triplicate!) which could not be conveyed by film.

The wide-canvas film such as I have suggested above calls for a blending of instructional and documentary technique. It must contain *detail*; it must also convey something of that *inspirational quality* which documentary directors always bring to their films.

I believe that this question of inspirational quality is important in all educational films. Taking the special case of a film about supplies, it would be an inspiration to the men of the R.A.S.C. demonstrating that their work is as vital and as dangerous as that of any other arm of the service. A shorter version might well be shown throughout the Army to correct the attitude of those who still labour under the misapprehension that the R.A.S.C. has "a cushy job". (It seems strange, no doubt, but such a view

is not uncommon in spite of the fact that R.A.S.C. convoys came in for special attention from dive-bombers right through the retreat from France!) In a "war of nerves" it is dangerous for any one unit or regiment of the Army to get either a superiority or inferiority complex. Good instructional films could do a great deal to eliminate inter-regimental nose-thumbing. On larger issues—such as the maintenance of fighters over the beaches of Dunkirk and of bomber-policy with regard to Dunkirk (discussed in detail in *The Diary of a Staff Officer*)—films could remove many popular fallacies and misconceptions.

When it comes to detailed instructional films the case for their use for military training is debatable. Would a soldier be interested in a film about the Lewis gun or the Bren, for instance? I doubt it. The use of small arms, automatics and many other weapons can only be taught and learnt by personal tuition. On the other hand I can well understand that the principles of artillery fire *can* be learnt from films. The *disposition* of artillery—indeed of weapons generally—certainly could be illustrated by films, especially ones using animated diagrams. Tactics in general offer great cinematic opportunities. Remember Wavell's three factors—topography, movement and supply. All three can be shown in films. For this reason a certain number of the recent news reels have been interesting to soldiers. Many soldier friends of mine were particularly interested in the sequences from *Baptism of Fire* shown in a recent *March of Time*. Such films are, it is true, only a second best to actual fighting experience but they help to bring home to the raw recruit conditions of service in a theatre of war.

A film made of manoeuvres or invasion exercises would be valuable. It would enable umpires at such exercises to make more detailed reports, and to record in permanent form the lessons learnt at each exercise. It could be shown to the troops who took part and give them a better idea of the general plan of the exercise. (It is astonishing how little one sees in a movement of great bodies of men. For instance, in the retreat from France my reaction was one of bewilderment; my most definite impression was that it was a muddle composed of men, lorries and equipment, on the move, retreating. . . . Beyond that the common soldier knew nothing.)

I believe the time has come when the common soldier will have to be told all that there is to know about his own particular job. As the soldier must become accustomed to the idea of having to fight alone, detached from his unit (the parachute troops carry this detachment to its extreme limit) his training, both general and particular, must be of the highest order. Good instructional films made with both imagination and scrupulous regard to detail could contribute a great deal toward the training of the modern mechanised soldier.



# REGIONAL CENTRES FOR MECHANICAL AIDS

by Patrick Meredith of the Department of Education  
University College of the South-West

*Officials love to centralise,  
Directors love to roam,  
But when the Blitz is on us  
They all must stay at home. . . .*

Many large organisations must have discovered in the Blitz a truth which may, indeed, have been obvious earlier, namely that beyond a certain point centralisation leads to a loss of efficiency. Even in peacetime there are many services whose effectiveness and vitality depend upon local support and initiative. In war-time the danger of enemy action on the central headquarters, coupled with the loss of contact due to restrictions on travelling, throw regional organisations increasingly on their own resources.

These regional resources, which can be drawn upon in the development of mechanical aids to education, have probably never yet been fully exploited, and it is the intention of this article to suggest a suitable basis on which they may be organised. The following suggestions are derived partly from actual experience in what is still a young and tentative project in the South-West, and partly from plans conceived but not yet realised for the future development of this project. Local needs, aims and resources are bound to vary somewhat, and, therefore, it may be best to describe the organisation in general and hypothetical terms.

## Types of Aid

The mechanical aids with which we are concerned are first and foremost the cine-projector; second, the radio; third, the epidiascope; the film-slide and the micro-projector; fourth, the gramophone; and fifth—not usually included as mechanical aids, and too apt to be neglected in spite of their fundamental importance—the making of educational models and charts.

The "region" for our purpose is likely to have an optimum extent of one rich or several poor counties, and for reasons to be given presently the area should contain a University or University College. An area smaller than this would have insufficient resources to make the organisation regionally self-sufficient. A wider area would raise travelling difficulties and would be unwieldy to administer. The organisation should aim at serving all institutions in the area concerned with education, training and provision of cultural needs, and should therefore cover junior, senior, secondary, central and technical schools, training-colleges, Government training centres, youth clubs, organisations such as the W.E.A. concerned with adult education, and the University.

## A Special Council

The organisation would have its policy decided by a council—let us call it "The Council for Mechanical Aids to Education" or "C.M.A.E."—representative of the administrative, educational and trade interests concerned. Its day-to-day decisions would be made by a small executive. To carry out these decisions an organising secretary possessing both technical knowledge and educational experience: and provided with adequate accommodation and clerical staff would be required.

What kind of policies, decisions and actions would be taken by the Council, the Executive and the Organising Secretary? What kind of accommodation and equipment would the latter need to carry them out? The answer lies in the work of the "Regional Centre for Mechanical Aids to Education". For the Council needs not only a name but a local habitation. The bulk of the Council's work would be done in the Regional Centre. A good deal of that work could, on the basis of actual experience, be described here and now. But it is important to bear in mind that Mechanical Aids are scarcely out of their swaddling-clothes. They have in their short existence made rapid progress, but it is uneven progress. The technicians are far more sure of their ground than the educationists, and much more research is needed before we can be sure that these marvellous new techniques are yielding their full educational harvest. Such research must inevitably be carried out by teamwork. The data must be collected in the schools. The task of co-ordinating and interpreting these data can be carried out only by an educationist trained in the handling of statistical data. This is one of the reasons why the Regional Centre should be housed in the University. It would then have a relation to the educational area analogous to that between a University Department of Agriculture and the agricultural area, or between a Medical School and the hospitals and clinics. If we are ever to pay more than the customary lip-service to education, the need for an adequate organisational basis for the supply and use of mechanical aids must be recognised.

## Its Policy

The policy of the Council would be directed towards securing for all the interested bodies the most effective arrangements for supplying their needs in this field. To secure that those needs be accurately assessed the Council should aim at encouraging teachers and others concerned with mechanical aids to express their views freely and describe their

experiences—indeed, these experiences should be regarded as among the most valuable though least tangible of the "resources" upon which the Council has to draw in its work. The Council would be financed by the bodies whose needs it would satisfy, though a new Council just starting would require an initial grant from some central fund to carry it through until it attained self-sufficiency. The Council should have representatives not only of regional interests but also of such central bodies as the British Film Institute, the Board of Education, the Ministry of Information and the B.B.C.

## A Film Library

The needs to be supplied are of two kinds, technical and educational. On the technical side the biggest single item is the setting up of an Area Film Library (this has already been achieved in the South-West). The whole problem of the supply and maintenance of projectors and radio sets to schools also comes under this heading. On the educational side the Regional Centre, in addition to providing a headquarters for the Council, would be able to undertake the following:—

- (1) To provide a Teachers' Advice Bureau for all questions relating to Mechanical Aids to Education.
- (2) To provide training for students and teachers in the various aids.
- (3) To act as a centre of research.
- (4) To provide film shows and demonstrations, lecture courses, etc., for teachers and to provide a forum for teachers' discussions.
- (5) To provide a library of books on the various aspects of visual and other aids to education, for the benefit of the Region.
- (6) To serve as a workshop or laboratory for all kinds of practical educational work—charts, models, photography, etc., and even as a film production unit if resources permit.
- (7) To provide special film shows for bodies requiring them, e.g. academic departments in the University not possessing a projector, outside bodies such as St. John Ambulance Association Food Advice Bureau, etc.

The advantages of such a regionally centralised organisation should be obvious. It would be sufficiently centralised to be economical and efficient, and sufficiently regional to be in personal contact with the region which it served.

† Owing to changes of address we cannot always remind our readers when their next subscription is due. We should be grateful if they would send it without delay. Our subscription is STILL 2s. 6d. a year post free.



# Films for the Youth Movement

by R. S. Miles of Stoke-on-Trent

The use of films in Youth Clubs need not, and should not, degenerate into passive viewing but may result in the members taking as active a part in film shows as in Dramatics, Craft Work, Physical Exercises or any other work. The main reason for my advocacy of its inclusion in the schemes for Youth Clubs is that it represents, without question, the dominant interest of adolescents to-day.

There are more than 20,000,000 admissions weekly to the cinemas of this country, the majority of which are to adolescents. The purists may cry for a movement founded upon activities on the part of Youth itself. They may deplore this craving for, and acceptance of, ready-made entertainment but their tears will not wash it away nor will any movement which does not recognise it replace it in the affections of Youth. This interest, then, in the cinema may well prove the royal road to increased membership. The mistake must not be made of making the Club cinema merely "uplift". Disney's remark that the cinema is (and must be) "80 per cent entertainment" remains as true for the Club as the commercial cinema.

## Film Appreciations

There are many entertaining feature films available which can be used for imparting a modicum of film appreciation. G.B.E. have at least twenty films, such as *The Great Barrier*, *Owd Bob*, *The Ghost Goes West*, *39 Steps*, *Secret Agent*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*—and so on. Messrs. Kodak have a lengthy list of silent films, among them some fine Chaplins. For the clubs having a 9.5 mm., Messrs. Wallace Heaton and Pathescope Library have an excellent selection of films for this type of projector. Mention must also be made of the accessions to the National Film Library of some classics. To *Nanook of the North* have been added, on 16 mm. stock, *The General Line*, *The Battleship Potemkin*, *Kameradschaft*, *Mother*. These are not dry-as-dust essays in film technique but very living and vitally interesting stories which will attract because of those very qualities. The use of such films cannot be accomplished without money, but the amount for each club may well be reduced by joint hirings by clubs.

## Sport

One of the features of club work is the emphasis upon physical activity in all its branches with swimming, football, cricket and athletics very prominent. Gaumont British again have some fine films on these. They are made by and commented upon by experts and those interested have the opportunity of seeing such swimming "stars" as Besford and Temme or soccer

players like Bastin, Roberts, "Dixie" Dean, Hibbs, etc., in slow motion and close-up, opportunities which they would never have under normal circumstances. The interest and discussions that would be stimulated by these is beyond doubt. There are also available a series of "Strength and Beauty" films such as *Daily Dozen*, seven Physical Training films in addition to the seven on soccer, five on swimming and six on tennis. Kodak distribute films on rugger, swimming, cricket and basket ball. The film can also help in other than purely physical activities. For Girl's clubs particularly are the cookery and kitchen planning films issued by the British Commercial Gas Association, the Electrical Development Association and the Ministry of Food, together with those made for the Singer Sewing Machine Co. and the Crafts' Films recently made for the Women's Institutes by Mary Field.

## The Use of Shorts

Beyond these specific uses is another occasional one to which the club cinema may be put—as a break in ordinary routine, for the showing of "shorts". An hour's programme of such, once a week or fortnight, will not bore as longer shows of such films would and provides the opportunity for showing many fine films. The G.P.O. productions—*Weather Forecast*, *Night Mail* and *North Sea*—should find a place here. So would the Petroleum Films' Bureau films which have so much of interest, at any rate for boys. The list can be made into a lengthy one.

## Political Education

One of the aspects of the German Youth Movement most strenuously condemned in this country has been its emphasis upon the physical aspect. I feel that the danger should be guarded against in our own movement. Talks on modern affairs would, I think, be appreciated in clubs which, if they have not the staff for such talks, could co-operate with local W.E.A. branches whose tutors would be willing to give the talks. The mistake must not be made of making these the factual, often dry-as-dust, talks which are given to many Adult Education Classes. They must be illustrated by episcopes, diascope or, best of all, by the cinematograph. Films are available, many *March of Time* issues among them *Nazi Conquest No. 1*, *Czechoslovakia*, *Inside Nazi Germany*, and *Forty-Ninth State*. The Central Film Library, with the continuous supply from the Ministry of Information added to the already considerable Empire and G.P.O. libraries, is a particularly rich source. Many talks on America are possible based on such films as *The River* and

*The Plow that Broke the Plains* (National Film Library), *The Spirit of the Plains* (Wallace Heaton) and, again, the *March of Time*.

Such a series of talks may well bear fine fruit in an increased interest, in later life, on the part of these young people in adult education.

One of my chief claims for the inclusion of the cinema in Youth Club activities has been that it need not induce mere passivity and a further direction in which films can bring their stimulating influence to bear is in the promotion of debates. Usually debates organised among school-children and adolescents terminate abruptly in embarrassed silence partly because of stage-fright, partly because of lack of organisation of knowledge. The easiest way to give cues to the principals in a debate is surely to let the whole meeting first see a film. The chief speakers would be well primed with organised facts, the audience would have much material for discussion. Such subjects as "The Film as Propaganda" illustrated by selected M.O.I. films and perhaps compared with some of the great Russian films; or perhaps, "Does Careless Talk Help the Enemy?" illustrated by, for example, *Dangerous Comment*. The Gas Industry's films provide many subjects for discussion. Without very much thought the list may be further extended but it must not be forgotten that the film must throughout remain the handmaiden of the debate.

## Money Raising

The sixth and final use to which the film may be put in club activities is in connection with that most essential part of Club life—raising funds. An occasional show for members, parents and friends with well-chosen full-length films eked out by free "shorts" will not only bring in money but give a fillip to outside and neighbouring interest in the Club's work. This use will make the most obvious appeal to clubs and must be considered as the irreducible minimum of the use to which the cinema should be put. Such use might easily lead to developments along lines indicated above.

Thus, barely outlined, and with only brief factual evidence to support my view, are the reasons why I, personally, consider the cinema to be of supreme importance to the Youth Movement. Its appeal depends upon a combination of interest and appeal to the intelligence and will, it is hoped, among other things, provide Clubs with some intellectual activity as distinct from the overwhelming physical activities now so popular. There is one great danger to be avoided, that of trying to make these uses of the cinema replace the commercial cinema. It simply cannot be done, for the commercial cinema has immense financial resources to provide a degree of comfort which can rarely, if ever, be obtained in a cinema of the type outlined here. The aim, and it is not easy of achievement, must be to make the film have more meaning and to induce ability to "shop" for films. If progress can be made in those directions then the cinema and the Youth Movement will, between them, have made a positive contribution to social progress.



# Principles of Technical Film Production

by Aveling Ginever

## A Film's teaching value?

I venture to analyse it in this order of factors:

- (1) Suitability of subject.
- (2) Cinematic treatment of the subject.
- (3) Presentation—
  - (a) The film's own production values.
  - (b) Machinery, i.e. projector, screen, speaker.

## Choice Film Subjects

*Suitability of subject.* It could be argued that every subject of human interest is capable of presentation on the screen. But selectivity should govern educational film production as it does the wider field of entertainment. One can only generalise on suitability, but experience should be brought to bear, and I suggest that the voice of the producer should be heard more often in committee.

If a subject can be taught without the aid of visual education—then a film is redundant. If a subject demands visual education, then *consider* if a cinematic treatment can be evolved that will make the screen presentation of *educational value*.

The simplest way of telling any story is by pictures. That is why cinematic treatment of educational subjects should aim for simplicity. Curiously enough, it is not an easy task to simplify a story. The greatest teacher the world has known found it very difficult to penetrate to the intelligence of his hearers. After the simplest of stories told to inculcate a lesson, he was bothered by stupid people asking questions. Now, the screen cannot answer questions. What, then, are its chief functions as a teacher aid? Firstly, to interest, and secondly, to demonstrate. The screen is two dimensional, a physical limitation providing an analogy to its place in education. It is a two dimensional aid, which, without the personal equation of the teacher, lacks the quintessence of all education—the conclusive argument *qua* the teacher.

The present trend towards conclusive argument in educational films tends to dogma, which is only within the teacher's province—certainly not the film producer's. There is little question that the dogmatic trend is due to the addition of speech. Who has not heard the impersonal voice of the commentator reciting lines from the text books, and either been lulled into a sense of false comprehension, dissipated when the lights go up, or irritated by a repressed desire to shout back at him.

Let us stick to our part of the job and make our pictures with the two main objectives—interest—demonstration—always in the forefront of our minds, and leave to the teacher his far more important task, which we cannot hope to emulate or imitate on the screen.

There is drama even in a nut. The dramatic element is the first we should seek for in any subject, because the dramatic always evokes and maintains interest. It is surprising, too. We should always surprise the audience—but truthfully! There is no need to strain for effect—the drama is there waiting to spring into animated life on the screen.

## Humour

The next element in interest values is humour—I like my audience in a good humour—so does the teacher, whether unanswerably high in the pulpit, august but lower on the lecture platform, or on the commanding level of the classroom. A teacher aid with such close association to drama and comedy as the film possesses should utilise these elements of interest.

Other interest values arise from the film craftsman's use of his technique. They should not be apparent except to the technically critical eye. Photographic values of composition, lighting, mobility, directional qualities of timing, proportion, continuity and balance, and mechanical virtues of laboratory treatment, grading, sound perspective and other arts and crafts—all play their part in maintaining the interest of the audience.

Demonstration possesses, of course, its own interest value. But demonstration goes further, because this factor is the inculcating one. Interest opens and keeps open the gate to the intelligence. Visual demonstration implants the seed, and, if in the progress of the demonstration, the seed germinates, then we shall have achieved comprehension, on which we fade out and leave the tender growth to the care of those better qualified.

Cinematic treatment of the demonstrative factor is based upon a simple, but never satisfied inquisitiveness. Not just how does the screw screw, but why. Yet, in constructing our film story of how and why, we suffer from the outset a great drawback, and, mark you, a drawback arising from the most important tool of our craft—the camera. The human eye can see at an angle of nearly 180 deg., and moves faster to change its range of vision than the fastest aeroplane. The eye of the camera stretched to its limit, i.e. the widest angle lens, sees at an angle of approximately 90 deg. The camera can change its range of vision only by very slow movements (panning or tracking), or by changing its lens. It is this drawback on the part of the camera that makes the art of film production a craft. The painter paints a picture, the dramatist stages his play from the angle of human vision. The film producer presents *his* subject from the angles of a number of lenses, each in itself showing a *different* view of the whole. Each different

view is unrelated to the whole, until it is placed on the screen in relation to two other views—one preceding it and one following it—in such a way that the observer does not realise that he is seeing a different view, but is led to believe that he is seeing the whole as one picture. That is the illusion of the film.

Above all, simplicity should be the keynote. Remember the Russian films, the showing of which created a cross current of highbrowism in the tide of our progress? These were made to influence the illiterate Russian worker of the emancipation period. They were so simple in construction, so naïve in the telling of their story, that many who had forgotten the simplicities discovered in them delightful complexities with which to confuse their own and even greater minds. Simplicity is the keynote of cinematic treatment of educational subjects. You must take the risk of standing accused as highbrow.

## Mr. User's Part

A word on presentation and production values. Again detail: detail in every phase of the film's making. Attention to continuity as particular as if you were producing George Formby. Coverage of scene as if you were making an epic. Timing in the cutting-room as if Eisenstein were looking over your shoulder, and a watchful eye in the laboratory on opticals and final grading.

Finally, a word to the user. A great deal of effort has gone into the making of the film you are going to show. The result is to be shown on your screen, through your projector. If the screen shows a badly lit picture, if the sound is mushy, you don't get the blame, nor does the projector. It's the producer, the scoundrel, who is at fault for making such a bad picture that it could hardly be seen, and recording such bad sound that it could hardly be heard. The producer has a full-time job to get his production through all the stages to an acceptable result. Even his tough heart quails when he sees his work mauled by inefficient projection.

After a long fight for recognition, it has taken a war to establish the Educational Film. The threat to its future development is now from within. Poor craftsmanship, inefficient production, static technique, cheapness for cheapness' sake, use of outmoded library subjects, inefficient projection, over-use of copies, these, among other aspects, endanger the normal evolution of the Educational Film towards its proper function in our national life—an influence as powerful as the printed word, but directed only towards the development of man's capacity to learn, to acquire knowledge, not for its own sake, but for the benefit and consolation that derive only from within the cultured mind.



# NEWS FROM THE SOCIETIES

“Sight and Sound” introduces this new feature, believing we should all know more about each other’s work

## Conference of British Missionary Societies

To portray their work overseas to supporters at home Missionary Societies have for many years found films of value. For the most part they have been amateur 16 mm. silent films, and pedestrian though many of them are, they do appeal to the limited circle of people already interested in the subjects which they describe. An advance has been the production of carefully edited and fully captioned films for use without a commentator, such as *Our Nigerian Neighbours* and *Do Thou Likewise* made recently by the Church Missionary Society. The second of these is a composite film built round the specific theme of medical and welfare work rather than merely portraying missionary activity in a particular place. By introducing shots of hospital work in this country it associates conditions of life at home with those abroad.

Recently there has been a new realisation of the increasing opportunities of using for Churches, Schools and the general public the film to demonstrate vividly the exciting fact of the world-wide nature of the Church with all its diverse, throbbing life. The complete dearth of up-to-date documentary films along these lines has also unfortunately become equally apparent. Consequently a group at Edinburgh House, the Headquarters of the Conference of British Missionary Societies, seeks to make plans for the production of such films, so that the work of the Church overseas may be presented as a subject of living interest to the general public and also for use in schools.

## National Savings Movement

It will surprise some people to learn that before this war began there were in existence six films devoted to the cause of National Savings. Several of these were immediately “dubbed” to introduce a war flavour, what time purely war savings productions were put in hand.

Before the war the films were shown chiefly in schools and institutes. Since November, 1939, all the new Savings films have been displayed in cinemas all over the Kingdom. When each production has done its round of the cinemas it is handed over to the mobile cinema unit, consisting of 15 vans. Then silent versions and 16 mm. reproductions are made for library purposes, to be used in schools and at gatherings of voluntary workers.

Sir Albert Clavering has charge of the mobile unit, which has entertained not less than 6,466,000 people in daylight since the first van went out in April, 1940. Meetings, with the mobile cinemas as the background, have numbered over 18,000 in 14 months.

Our nine include *The Volunteer Worker* presented by Walt Disney, and several shorts, including *Save Your Way to Victory*.

## The Boy Scouts’ Association

The Boy Scouts’ Association has altogether, nine films available for which they ask only a service fee of 1s. per reel—the hirer paying carriage both ways.

During the last quarter the Association has added a short 7-minute colour film depicting Wolf Cubs performing the Jungle Dances. A new film taken at the World Rover Moot in Scotland in 1939 is now being cut and edited and will be released for exhibition very shortly. Work is now in progress on a script for a film of Scout War Service.

In spite of the very light evenings 34 films have been sent out for showing during the last three months.

## The British Social Hygiene Council

The British Social Hygiene Council has made increasing use of films as a means of illustrating both public lectures and instructional courses with a biological background to young people on the place of sex in life.

A feature of social hygiene campaigns undertaken for Local Authorities has been an introductory or “decoy” meeting at a Cinema to advertise these courses of lectures to young people. At these cinema shows, one of the Council’s dramatic films such as *Trial for Marriage* or *Love on Leave* (the latter a new production with an up-to-date war background) with a supporting programme of films supplied by the Central Film Library of the Ministry of Information and a selected musical film is shown. The Youth Courses which follow are illustrated by the Council’s biological films *Sex in Life* and *Human Reproduction*.

Working in co-operation with the Central Council for Health Education, one B.S.H.C. film unit gave, over a period of three months, some 70 film shows in London Air Raid Shelters of both social hygiene programmes (as in above Cinema shows) and general health programmes where the films of other health organisations affiliated to the Central Council were shown. Similar shows have also been given to 40 A.F.S. stations in London.

Talks have also been given to units of the Defence Forces all over the country, in nearly every case accompanied by the showing of one of the Council’s films.

In addition to *Love on Leave* mentioned above, a new 12 minutes medical film entitled *A Doctor Talks* has been produced, giving information as to the cause and nature of venereal diseases and a history

of their treatment and cure. Stewart Rome takes the part of the Doctor.

## The Workers’ Film Association

The Workers’ Film Association has already a number of films to its credit, including *The Builders*, the first ever to be made in this country on the history and achievements of the Trade Union Movement. The Association also issues a monthly Film Bulletin which includes reviews of feature and documentary films from the point of view of their relationship to the social life of our people.

Many Co-operative Societies and a number of Trade Unions and Local Labour Parties have purchased sound projectors and undertake a systematic volume of film work. Workers’ Film Societies have been formed in Birmingham, Walsall and London for the production of 6 mm. silent films, whilst other Societies have been formed for the exhibition of films of a special character.

The five London Co-operative Societies have set aside a film fund, and already two films *Advance Democracy* and *Voice of the People* have been produced, which the W.F.A. distribute to associated organisations.

Experiments are being undertaken in the production of 16 mm. sound film using direct method of recording. *The Builders* was produced in this way and a series of Trade Union films on the contribution which the common people are making to the war effort is under consideration.

## Youth Hostels’ Association

Never before has the demand for the Y.H.A. films *Youth Hails Adventure* and *The Magic Shilling* been so great as during the last few months. Local groups everywhere have been busy with propaganda, and the films have been shown in towns and villages all over the country, and to a wide variety of audiences—schools, youth centres and young people’s clubs, groups of factory workers’ in air-raid shelters and elsewhere. Since both were made a year or so before the present war, are silent and taken an hour to show, it speaks much for the quality of the films that amongst audiences, all of which include habitual cinemagoers, they continue to be so well received. It is true that the need for a new film—something up-to-date and shorter—is now finding expression, but in the meantime, the two original films, supplemented by smaller films taken by amateur photographer Y.H.A. members, continue to hold the field with great popularity.



# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

*Provides a record of current activities in Cultural, Technical and Educational Films*

**PUBLISHED MONTHLY • JULY ISSUE CONTAINED**

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

THE BRITISH COUNCIL

WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC WANT?

*By Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A NEW  
WORLD *By Ivor Montagu*

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

REPORT FROM A MINING VILLAGE

*(M.O.I. Films in Scotland)*

## THE SCIENTIFIC FILM

*(Memorandum by the Scientific Films  
Commission)*

REPRODUCING A PLAY

M.O.I. FIVE MINUTE FILMS

*(List for April, May and June)*

TWO FILMS OF THE MONTH

*(I Wanted Wings—Western Union)*

FILM SOCIETY NEWS

## CORRESPONDENCE

Walter C. Mycroft

Darrel Catling

William E. Dick

FILM DISCUSSION GUIDES

DOCUMENTARY BOOKINGS FOR  
JULY

DIAGRAM SEQUENCE

*By Frances Rodker*

**Subscription: Six months 3/- (post free), Single copies 6d. each from**

**DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER • 34 Soho Square, W.1 • Gerrard 4253**

*Owned and Published by Film Centre Ltd.*

Editorial Board : EDGAR ANSTEY • JOHN GRIERSON • DONALD TAYLOR • JOHN TAYLOR  
BASIL WRIGHT • Editor : RONALD HORTON

# LIFE AND LETTERS TO-DAY

*Continuing THE LONDON MERCURY AND BOOKMAN*

*(Under the editorship of ROBERT HERRING)*

## Contributions to SUMMER NUMBERS include

"SUNDAY AFTERNOON" a new story

by Elizabeth Bowen

"JOURNALS AT DAWN"

by Margiad Evans

"DIARY OF A DOCKYARD WORKMAN,

1829-1879" (Extracts from the Year-Book of  
Thomas Murphy, edited by Gordon Jeffery)

## Travel

"IN THAILAND" by W. L. Carter

## Science

"TRICHINELLA" by Geoffrey Lapage

New Poetry by Alun Lewis, Nicholas Moore,  
Alex Comfort, Brenda Chamberlain, etc.

Short Stories by Osbert Sitwell, Geraint Goodwin,  
Crichton Porteous, L. S. Boyd, etc.

**THEATRE—Richard Southern ART—John Petts MUSIC—E. W. White**  
**REVIEWS by H. E. Bates, Gwyn Jones, A. Calder-Marshall, etc.**

**PUBLISHED MID-MONTH 1/-**

*New Editorial Address: 18 STATION ROAD, ECKINGTON, near SHEFFIELD, DERBYSHIRE*  
*Business Department: M. L. VOULES, 41 UPPER TOWN ROAD, GREENFORD, MIDDLESEX*



# *Attention* . . . . is gripped by

## "KODASCOPE" EE

(A.C. Educational Model)

### the supreme visual aid



The "Kodascope" EE is the projector specifically designed for classroom work. It incorporates the features which experience has proved to be most desirable and is free from superfluous refinements which add to cost but not to usefulness.

Sturdily built, it requires the minimum of attention. Operation is trouble-free, and can be left to a pupil if desired. Special design and accurate construction give quiet running.

Moderate in first cost, it is extremely economical in current consumption

and upkeep: a highly efficient optical system gives brilliant projection from a lamp of only 300 watts.

The machine can be adapted for different rooms, thanks to interchangeable lenses of varying focal length: and can easily be moved from one room to another in its carrying case. Price £30. (Purchase Tax extra). Further details will be gladly supplied by Kodak, who as pioneers in the use of motion pictures in education, can offer expert advice on the fitting up of suitable equipment: write to

# *Kodak Ltd.*

WEALDSTONE, HARROW, MIDDLESEX